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Editor's note

There's nobody quite like Martha Argerich. Whether you are a fan of her playing or not (I, for one, find her spellbinding), it's impossible to deny that she has a charisma that just draws you in. Read Jessica Duchen's poignant retrospective on page 12, and you'll learn that despite all her talent and personal magnetism, this great pianist still suffers all the anxiety, insecurity and stress that seem to go with the job. She doesn't play solo much anymore, perhaps to avoid the anxiety of being alone on stage.

I hope you're sitting comfortably now, because the word 'anxiety' weaves its way through this issue. Whether you're an Argerich or an amateur, performing in front of others can cause anxiety, a topic put under the microscope in John Evan's article on page 70. John speaks to performers and academics who have creative coping strategies. As John reminds us, 'Playing the piano is fun and very special. Not everyone can do it – but you can'. He's right! Whether it's an easy Haydn minuet or a difficult Chopin scherzo, we should be thrilled we can play at all. (Speaking of which, don't miss Argerich's brilliant take on Chopin's Scherzo No 3 on our CD.)

Pianists aren't the only ones who have to deal with nerves – piano teachers do too. Some of the tests that would-be teachers must take to gain formal qualifications sound as nerve-wracking as a concert performance, as Inge Kjemtrup's article on page 78 shows. Plus, after you've read Inge's article, you'll have a better idea of what all those fiddly letters after a teacher's name mean.

But then maybe too much time sitting at the piano is stressful. How about closing the lid for a while and practising away from your piano, as Mark Tanner suggests in his masterclass on page 16? It's not as daft as it sounds – Walter Gieseking often committed new works to memory while travelling.

There's lots more to read inside this issue (and play in the Scores: Satie's gentle *Gnossienne* and Debussy's jaunty *Golliwog's Cakewalk* are among the treats), but I want to tell you about our special supplement that appears with the next issue: our *Guide to Digital Pianos 2015-16*. It features pages of the best digital pianos, for all types of players and budgets. A perfect little booklet to flip through as Christmas draws near.

Finally, as I send these pages to print, I'm dashing out the door on my way to the finals of the Leeds Piano Competition. I cannot begin to imagine how those six finalists are feeling right now – nervous, no doubt. We can only congratulate them for having reached this far. So let's embrace our nerves!

Erica

ERICA WORTH, EDITOR

Make sure that you keep in touch with me – what I've been up to, which pianists I've spoken to, exclusive extra articles and interviews – by registering for our FREE e-newsletter. All you need to do is go to **www.pianistmagazine.com**

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Which major international piano competition did Martha Argerich win in 1965?
A: Chopin (Warsaw) B: Van Cliburn (USA) C: Tchaikovsky (Moscow)

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Postcard entries are also accepted. Please send to Erica Worth, Editor, COMP PIA0118, *Pianist*, 6 Warrington Crescent, London W9 1EL, UK. Competition closes 27 November. Quote PIA0118 and remember to put your name, address and telephone number on the postcard as well as your answer.

Answer to page 4 competition in Pianist No 83: C: Scott Joplin. Congratulations to the three winners: Mr Paul Fox (Lancashire), Mr Michael Tompsett (Devon), Ms E Watford (Durham)

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Readers' Letters

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WRITE TO: The Editor, Pianist, 6 Warrington Crescent, London, W9 1EL, UK
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STAR LETTER wins a surprise CD. Letters may be edited.

STAR LETTER

Piano passion on a summer holiday

This summer, having resurrected my interest in the piano, I responded to an advertisement in *Pianist* and booked myself on the Malvern Piano Holiday in Worcester at the beginning of August.

I wasn't sure what to expect, and when preparing pieces for the course, I began to have misgivings, and thus I was very nervous and apprehensive upon arrival. The first day was pretty full on, and at the end of it, I wondered what I had let myself in for! However, my concerns gradually evaporated as the week progressed, what with the thoughtful combination of masterclasses, workshops, one-to-one tuition and practice time, plus the afternoon recreational activities and evening concerts. The friendly, supportive and non-competitive atmosphere was also reassuring.

I returned home extremely tired, and realised that this experience, the first time around, is one that is enjoyed in retrospect. The week was challenging, and apart from the obvious benefits gained pianistically, it was also an enlightening and enriching experience and one that I would not have wanted to miss.

This holiday has inspired me to broaden my limited musical knowledge and has provided the confidence and desire to expand my repertoire. Admittedly these types of holiday do not come cheaply but the benefits are priceless, whatever your level of ability. I commend them to anyone with aspirations of improving their piano skills, musical awareness and knowledge. It's also a great opportunity to mix with like-minded people!

Lynden Carter, Exeter

How wonderful that you decided to take on the adventure of a piano-focused holiday, and bravo for sticking with it, despite your apprehensions! We're glad to hear that it also proved to be so inspirational for your playing. Thank you for sharing your story. A surprise CD is on its way to you.

Music's healing powers

I am writing in response to the Star Letter and the Editor's Note in *Pianist* No 85 about how playing the piano can help keep illness at bay. I am a latecomer to the piano, but I use my musical skills in my job as activities coordinator at a care home with 89 residents, all age 60 and over (the average age is 90) who have a range of medical conditions, including strokes and dementia.

I have found that any type of relaxing music, played either on a CD player and or by me on a five-octave keyboard, encourages residents to join in. I try and pick suitable music that they know. Those residents who have had strokes are able to join in by singing along, often word perfect and clear enough to be understood by all. Their mood is lifted, and the same applies to those who have dementia-like conditions.

As well as singing, residents participate by playing hand-held rhythm instruments or by clapping along to the music, often unaware they are exercising limbs they said they were unable to move. Those who used to play the piano often join in by moving their hands in a way a pianist would do when sitting at a keyboard.

Residents are much happier after a session, and will often talk about their past lives in a very positive way. The more I do music with them, the more songs they remember. Residents often start singing when they see me walking around the home, and I just sing along with them – I am blessed with a good singing voice!

Visiting family members often join in the sessions and are gratified to see their relatives happy and enjoying life in a way that is open to them. I have also noticed that after a session the staff are happier and there is more relaxed atmosphere.

I believe that music helps to keep illness at bay, as it reaches parts of the brain that other activities do not. I would be interested in hearing from other readers on the subject of music/creative arts and the part it plays in illness.

Diana Pinchin, Surrey

We'd be pleased to hear from other readers who have had similar experiences with music's healing power. As a special one-off, we'd like to send you a CD of 'soothing' music to play to your residents.

Music theory: not for everyone

I imagine that those who are 'against' music theory don't know it, which is the case with me. I have played the piano since I was a toddler, but didn't have a lesson until I was about 14 years old. I have always been able to read music well, but I have no clue about the big picture. I have decided to stop feeling bad about it. I don't need to know how electricity works in order to switch on the lights.

Maybe knowing the theory behind a Chopin nocturne would deepen my appreciation, but the other side of the coin is that music remains mysteriously beautiful to me. I don't know in which key a piece starts, or what genius moves it to the next key. I'm not a composer. I'm an interpreter.

Thank you for your thought-provoking magazine. Also, thanks for adding the translation of UK/US terminology at the beginning of the scores! I always wondered what semiquavers were! I thought if they quavered, they must be a trill.

Mary Kelleher, Northampton, MA, USA

Cooking up piano skills

'If you want your playing to progress you will have to go through the exams,' said my new teacher. I had been playing more or less on my own for over 40 years, and so had time to acquire lots of bad habits that needed ironing out (not all eradicated yet) and I needed to pass Grade 5 theory before I could get any further. My next five years were dedicated to taking ABRSM exams – I passed Grade 8 in the millennium year.

Meanwhile, my husband took up cooking in self-defence and firmly shut the green baize door to the kitchen so that he could not hear me pounding scales. To my delight, and the envy of my friends, he has continued cooking even though my exam days are over.

My marvellous teacher is in the mould of Fanny Waterman, and together we have discovered many gems in *Pianist*. Recently I have been learning the slow movement of Schubert's Sonata D664 (*Pianist* No 74) and from that have moved on to the same sonata's Allegro. The first piece I was allowed to indulge in after my final exam was the gorgeous *Rustle of Spring* by Sinding. I don't think it has been in *Pianist* and it would be great to see the score again and hear it on CD. Any chance?

Joanna Bridges Webb, Surrey

We will see what we can do regarding 'Rustle of Spring'. It's a fabulous piece. Not easy, though!

A woman's touch?

One day I heard a performance of Chopin's F minor Ballade on Australia's very fine classical radio station, ABC Classic FM. Without foreknowledge of the performer's identity, I suspected with some conviction that this was a woman playing, and I was not disappointed; I believe it was Gabriela Montero. Is the notion of a woman's touch in the world of piano validated by any scholarly endorsement or am I just imagining that the hands of the fairer sex bring a unique something special to our craft?

David Sherrott, Denmark, Western Australia

You've touched on a subject that always inspires controversy, as there are so many contrary examples to the assumed male/female playing styles – just think of the fierce power of our cover artist, Martha Argerich, or the finesse of Krystian Zimerman. What do other readers think?

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Casio partnership with Bechstein produces the Celviano Grand Hybrid, a first for both makers

In its 30th year of making digital pianos, Casio has unveiled its first hybrid, the Celviano Grand Hybrid piano, created in collaboration with the Berlin-based piano maker C. Bechstein. With this new instrument, and with British pianist Benjamin Grosvenor (pictured at the launch with executives from Casio and Bechstein) as its ambassador, the Japanese maker has moved up a step in the competitive and ever-expanding advanced digital piano market.

The most eye-catching feature of the Celviano Grand Hybrid, first revealed at a press event in Berlin in September, is the inclusion of three European grand piano sounds: 'Berlin Grand' (based on a sample of a C. Bechstein D 282 grand), the 'Hamburg Grand' and the 'Vienna Grand'. With these three sound choices available on its piano, Casio has attempted to capture the piano characteristics of these famous musical cities.

Like other hybrids, the Celviano Grand Hybrid has elements of both acoustic and digital instruments. The acoustic side appears in the form of real concert grand piano action – the Natural Grand Hammer Action – wooden keys, hammers and all (albeit without the strings to follow on). The keys are made of spruce wood, as they are in Bechstein's acoustic grand pianos, and the whole action comes in one unit. Other acoustic grand elements are smooth dynamic changes between *piano* to *forte*, different lid adjustments, and that all-too familiar sound of the damper pedal being raised.

The two Celviano Grand Hybrid models available so far are the GP-500BP and the GP-300. At the launch, Grosvenor played Ravel's Toccata from the *Le tombeau de Couperin* on the GP-500BP, set to 'Berlin Grand' sound. He remarked after playing the new instrument, 'I think playing this Ravel demonstrates its abilities – with the repeated notes, light playing, dynamics. Now, for me, the real action is a big selling point. It feels like a real piano under the fingers.'

The GP-500BP (retailing at £2,999) and the GP-300 (at £1,999) will be available in the UK from mid October, along with a third model – the AP-700 (at £1,499). Worldwide release dates will be announced soon.

Further information at www.grand-hybrid.com and www.casio-music.com. A full story on the new piano appears inside the next issue of Pianist.

WORDS AND MUSIC ARE IN PLAY AGAIN AT KINGS PLACE LONDON

Celebrity gala opens new season of Lucy Parham's Word/Play Series

On 6 December, concert pianist and *Pianist* contributor Lucy Parham launches her third Word/Play series at London's Kings Place with a celebrity gala featuring the good and the great revealing their secret piano passion: they'll play Schumann's *Album for the Young* in relay.

To underscore that playing the piano is for everybody (something *Pianist* readers already know), among those sitting down at the piano stool will be actor Edward Fox, Team GB athlete William Sharman, BBC Radio 3 presenter Sarah Walker and former *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger.

But, as always, the focus of the Word/Play series is the interaction of text and music. Parham (above, flanked by Martin Jarvis and Henry Goodman) doesn't perform in all the concerts but, she explains, 'I introduce them all and try to plan them with great care so that the words and music theme caters for a variety of tastes, from "Just William" to John Lill!'

The series comprises actor Martin Jarvis and pianist Richard Sisson in a 'Just William' story and a Jeeves retelling (24 Jan), star gardener Alan Titchmarsh and pianist Richard Sisson in 'The Glory of the Garden' (6 Mar), Classic FM personality John Suchet and John Lill in a new 'Morning with Beethoven' (7 Feb), and Parham's addition to her composer portrait series, this time looking at Rachmaninov's life and music with actor Henry Goodman (10 Apr).

To find out more about Word/Play, go to kingsplace.co.uk or to lucyparham.com.

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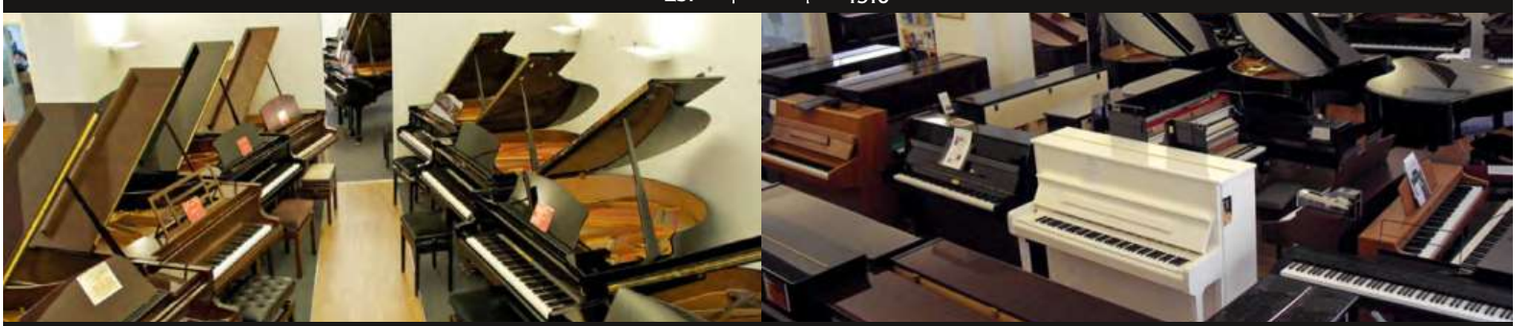

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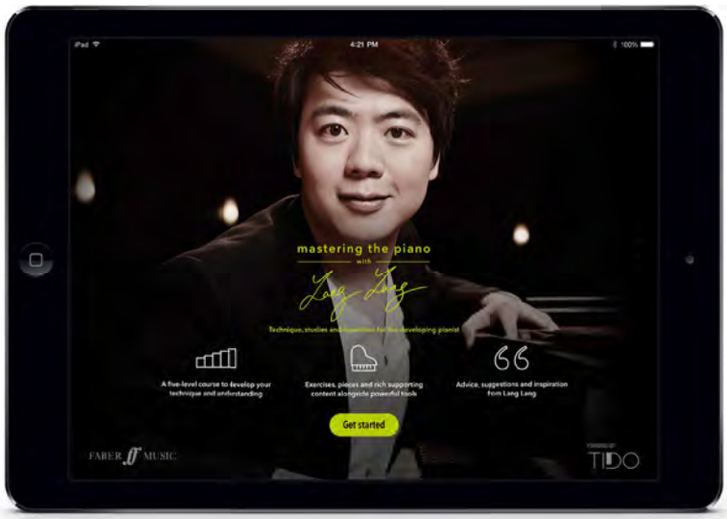

Learn with Lang Lang on your digital device

'Mastering the Piano with Lang Lang' app focuses on essential piano techniques

Mastering the Piano with Lang Lang, the first app from the distinguished publisher Faber Music, concentrates on key piano techniques, from the basics of exploring the keyboard and hand coordination to more advanced techniques for pedalling, dexterity, and interpretation and style.

Designed to complement Faber's recently released book series of the same name, the *Mastering the Piano* app combines the energy and exuberance of Lang Lang's teaching and performing style with innovative technologies and solid pedagogy to 'give you a 360-degree view of technique,' in the words of Faber Music's Digital Director, Sarah Holcroft.

Each level in the new app series is made up of eight units (a level is the equivalent of an exam grade). Inside each unit there are warm-up pieces, a study, two pieces with playback and a 'wider learning' feature for information about the pieces and composer, as well as a video of Lang Lang at the keyboard introducing the unit's topic. The instructional components have audio explanations and there are recordings of all the music. There are many opportunities for customisation: the playback speed of the pieces can be adjusted, while the sheet music can be modified by a student or teacher to add fingerings, dynamics and other notation.

Level 1 of the new app series was launched in September, with Levels 2-5 expected to be in place before Christmas. You can buy a complete level for £11.99 or an individual unit for £2.99. The first unit of all levels can be downloaded for free, so you can try before you buy.

Although just available for iOS now, Faber plans to make versions of the app for Android devices as well. Holcroft says the app has had a positive reaction from the concert pianist and technology nut who inspired it: 'Lang Lang's first reaction was, "It looks cool!"'

Mastering the Piano with Lang Lang from Faber Music is available at the App Store.

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News

All the latest news from the world of the piano

New film on Andnes's Beethoven journey

Documentary looks at Leif Ove Andnes's four-year long project

'I've felt increasingly in the last few years that Beethoven's music is the most meaningful music there is,' says Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes in *Concerto: A Beethoven Journey*. Directed by Phil Grabsky, best know to classical music fans for his 'In Search of…' films, the new film documents Andsnes's four-year exploration of Beethoven's life and music, and shares the insights Andsnes gained in the process of performing all of the piano concertos around the world with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

'I knew this exclusive journey with Leif Ove would allow me access to great performance – but I had no idea it would be this great,' says Grabsky of the film. 'These became the best-reviewed concerts of the past few years and I was on stage to record them. Even more importantly the music and Leif Ove's intelligent and accessible insight creates a staggeringly interesting new biography of arguably the greatest composer of all time.'

Concerto: A Beethoven Journey is on limited UK release until November, including a London screening on 27 September at the Curzon Mayfair.

To find out more about Concerto: A Beethoven Journey, including screening dates worldwide, go to seventh-art.com. Andsnes talked about his Beethoven Journey in Pianist No 84.

Leonskaja and Kovacevich mark birthdays in concert

November recitals at Wigmore Hall for two world-class pianists

Russian pianist Elisabeth Leonskaja will celebrate her 70th birthday with a concert at London's Wigmore Hall on 22 November (her actual birthday is a day later). To help make the occasion especially memorable, Leonskaja has invited several distinguished musical friends, including members of the Doric String Quartet and composer/clarinettist Jörg Widmann. Leonskaja will play a selection of Brahms waltzes, and joins her colleagues in Schubert's 'Trout' Piano Quintet and Mozart's First Piano Quartet, among other works.

Earlier in the month, on 2 November, the American-born, London-based pianist Stephen Kovacevich also marks his birthday, his 75th, at Wigmore. To read Kovacevich's thoughts on this already sold-out concert and its famous guest artist, Martha Argerich, turn to page 12.

For full details and to book tickets, go to wigmore-hall.org.uk.

Following in Fanny Waterman's footsteps at 'The Leeds'

Paul Lewis and Adam Gatehouse to take charge

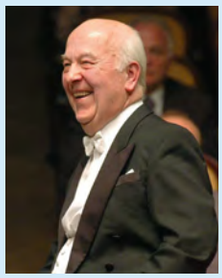
Pianist Paul Lewis and radio producer Adam Gatehouse have been announced as joint artistic directors of the Leeds International Piano Competition. They will take over the reins following the conclusion of this year's competition, which also marks the retirement of the competition's co-founder, artistic director and guiding light, Dame Fanny Waterman.

Paul Lewis (seated left in the photo with Gatehouse on the right) is an internationally respected concert pianist and the founder of his own festival, Midsummer Music, while Adam Gatehouse's wide-ranging career includes time as a senior editor at BBC Radio 3 when he founded the BBC New Generation Artists scheme. 'Following in the footsteps of that diminutive giant of the musical world Dame Fanny Waterman is a daunting challenge,' said Gatehouse, 'and I hope that together we can maintain and build on the awesome international reputation and artistic integrity she has brought to this wonderful competition.'

The results of this year's Leeds Competition were announced after this issue of Pianist went to press. Look for a full report in the next issue. To find out more about the Leeds Competition, go to leedspiano.com.

OBITUARIES

Czech pianist Ivan Moravec



Czech pianist Ivan Moravec, best known for his interpretations of Chopin and the music of his countrymen, died in July at the age of 84. He was born in Prague and studied at the conservatory in that city. The wider world learned of his talent when he was praised by Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, which led to recordings and concertising outside of the Eastern Bloc. His Chopin recordings, including an album of the Chopin Nocturnes in 1965, drew accolades, as did his essays of French and Czech repertoire. His performance of Mozart's Piano Concerto No 22 is heard on the soundtrack of the film *Amadeus*.

In *Pianist* No 19, the late Calum MacDonald praised Moravec's CD of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto (a piece that got the pianist into hot water in 1964 when he and conductor George Szell disagreed on the interpretation), Ravel's Concerto in G and Franck's *Symphonic Variations*. MacDonald described it as 'a disc to treasure' that is full of 'performances of great warmth and real wisdom', adding that 'all the time one feels in contact with a musical intelligence of genuine sympathy and wide experience'.

British jazz legend John Taylor

The admired British jazz pianist and composer John Taylor died unexpectedly on 17 July at the age of 72. Born in Manchester, Taylor was self-taught on piano. He became the house pianist at Ronnie Scott's club, accompanying British players and visiting American jazz players, and refining his own playing and composing style.

In 1977, he joined Azimuth, a trio with trumpeter Kenny Wheeler and singer Norma Winstone. Taylor released many albums, including the critically praised solo disc *Insight* and, with bassist Palle Danielsson and drummer Martin France, *Angel of the Presence.*

'John was an integral part of the soundworld that emerged in contemporary jazz in Europe over the last 40 years,' says Nottingham International Jazz Competition winner Tom Hewson, who counts Taylor as a mentor. 'There are fewer more distinctive and tangible musical legacies than the soundworld Taylor helped create as a composer and improviser alongside musicians such as Kenny Wheeler and Norma Winstone; it has become part of the DNA of contemporary jazz.'

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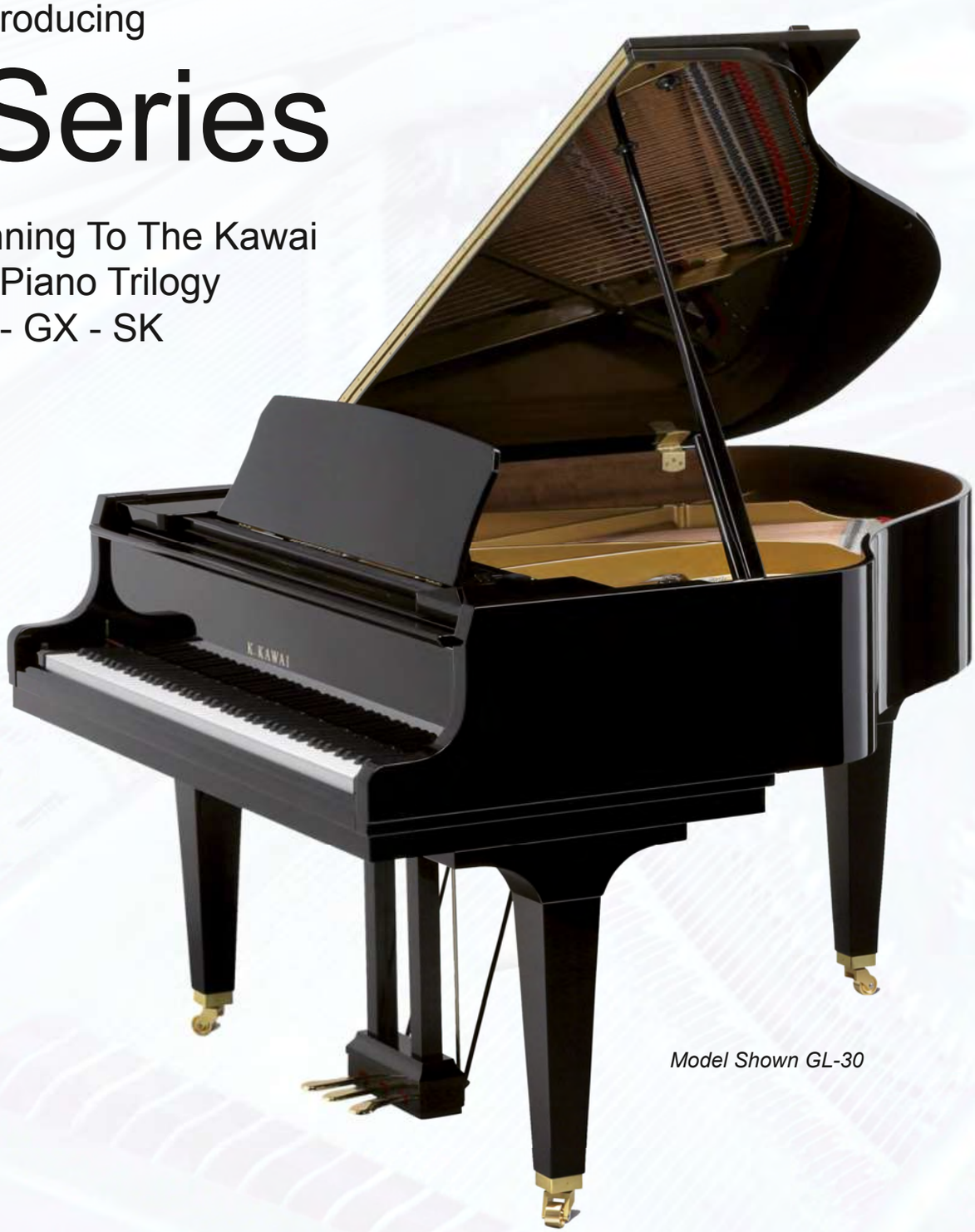

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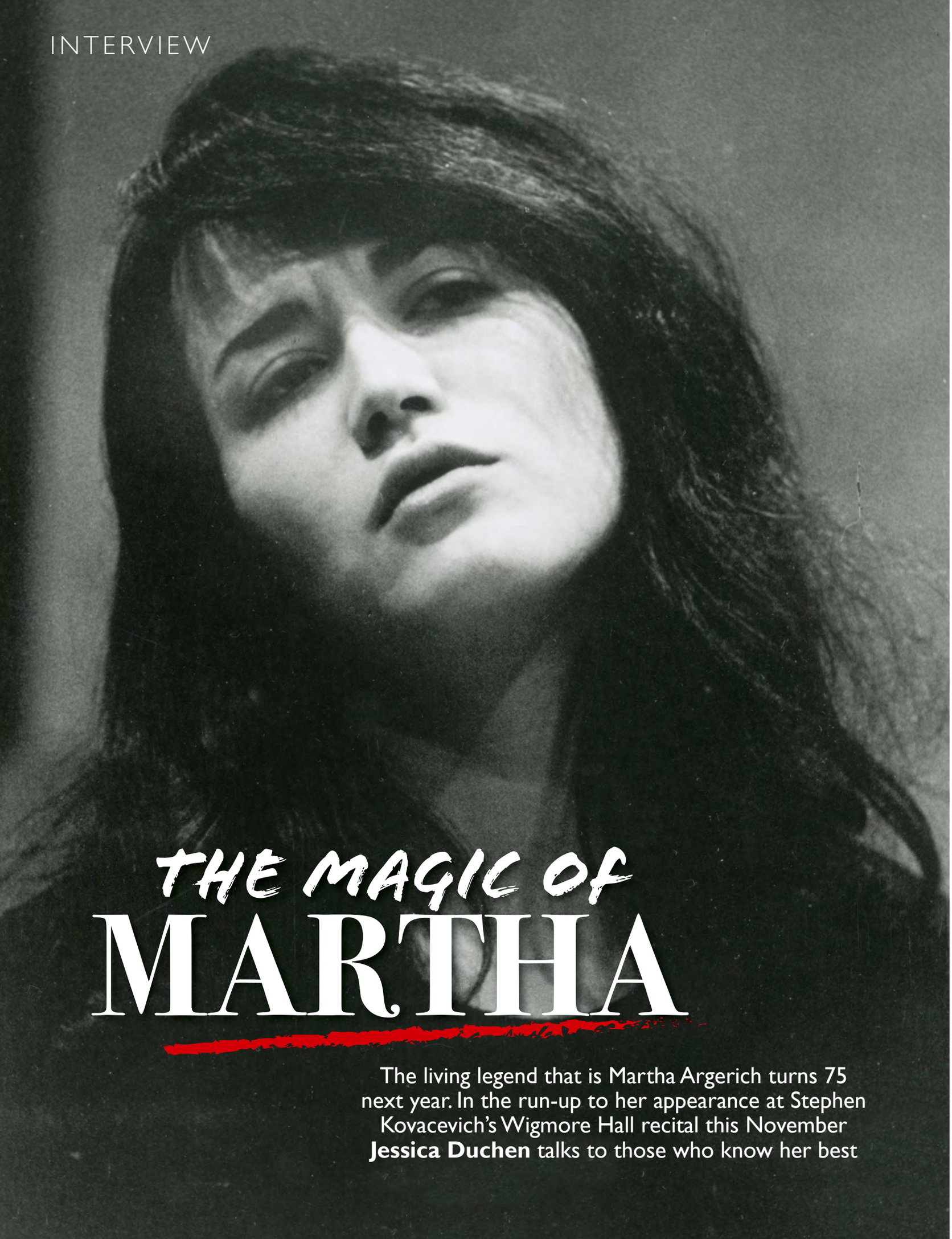


THE MAGIC OF MARTHA

The living legend that is Martha Argerich turns 75 next year. In the run-up to her appearance at Stephen Kovacevich's Wigmore Hall recital this November **Jessica Duchen** talks to those who know her best

Ask any piano fan to name the three greatest pianists alive, and chances are you will hear the name 'Martha Argerich' in that list. And with good reason. If you are lucky enough to hear Argerich play live – and it takes a certain amount of luck – you experience a type of magic fire: the mesmeric focus, edge-of-seat excitement and the special ingredient of almost childlike wonder that attends her presence at the piano. Her panther-like attack, light yet powerful, the airiness of the textures and the depth of sonic perspective she offers are second to none; but perhaps above all, although Argerich is now 74 and a grandmother, she still plays with the fresh enchantment of a 21-year-old in love.

In November Argerich comes to London to join Stephen Kovacevich (her ex-partner and father of her daughter Stéphanie) at the Wigmore Hall to celebrate his 75th birthday. Kovacevich himself seems, on one level, a very different type of pianist, yet a special affinity between them still makes them sound, at heart, like soulmates. 'I think we are,' Kovacevich agrees. 'Together we had what we call Round 1 and Round 2 – our daughter was Round 2. Today we're more than great friends: we're family, it's not a negotiable thing. And there's a deep rapport. We have quite different ways of expressing it, but what she's attracted to in me is something she wishes she had, and vice-versa. But it's the real thing.'

How would he explain the magnetism in Argerich's playing? 'Apart from her technical genius, her rubato is something which you can't teach and which I find marvellous,' Kovacevich suggests. 'The taste is intrinsically beautiful. It's not goody-goody rubato – with some people you feel rubato is a way of showing off, but with her it's completely organic.

'Her sound is wonderful. She has a gift and she must enjoy showing her gift – and that's infectious,' he adds. 'Some of her best playing is Bach, by the way. It's almost jazzy: it dances and it jumps and it's delightful and witty. And there's a quality you hear in old recordings of violinists – a freedom, a grandeur and an openness, and she has that.'

Kovacevich picks out the Bartók Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion as a favourite recording that they made together and also points to her discs of the Beethoven Violin Sonatas with Gidon Kremer as something special to him. 'We don't see eye to eye about Beethoven,' he acknowledges, 'but it's thrilling, what she does, and very interesting too.'

At the Wigmore Hall, he and Argerich will offer a first half on two pianos, with Debussy's *En blanc et noir* followed by Rachmaninov's *Symphonic Dances*. In their days together, he recounts, Rachmaninov was a figure they both revered and adored as both pianist and composer. You might not expect that from Kovacevich, who has long been more associated with the Viennese classics, but neither would you necessarily expect Argerich to love the playing and writing of Artur Schnabel, which Kovacevich says she does. 'We influenced each other – sometimes the influence was a little foreign to one's initial set-up, but it was certainly strong.'

'A lot of artists play the piano, but Martha lives it. She tells us her secrets, her stories, her fears, her courage and everything that's inside her, and her regrets, in such an honest way that it's impossible not to be moved by this great woman'

-Gabriela Montero, concert pianist

ACTS OF GENEROSITY

Few other musicians spark such adoration among peers and juniors alike as does Martha Argerich. Argerich surrounds herself with almost an extended family of younger musicians, helping many rising artists into the limelight via 'Progetto Martha Argerich' at the Lugano Festival.

Among them is Gabriela Montero, the celebrated Venezuelan pianist who is renowned for her extraordinary improvising abilities. She credits Argerich with changing her life. Having encountered her a few times thanks to a connection with her teacher, and at the Chopin Competition in 1995 when Argerich was on the jury, she went back stage to meet her in Montreal in 2001. ▶

MARTHA ARGERICH STEP BY STEP

1941: Born in Buenos Aires.

1946: Aged five, begins piano lessons with her mother's teacher, Vincenzo Scaramuzza.

1949: Debut, aged eight, in a Mozart concerto, making herself believe that 'if I missed a single note, I would explode'.

1953: Performs at the Teatro Colón.

1955: Family moves to Europe. Martha studies with Madeleine Lipatti, Nikita Magaloff and Friedrich Gulda.

1957: Aged 16, wins Geneva International Competition and the Ferruccio Busoni International Competition in a three-week span.

1960: Makes debut recital recording for Deutsche Grammophon.

1961: Crisis of confidence leads her to seek advice from Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli.

1963: Marries musician Robert Chen and has first daughter, Lyda.

1965: Wins International Chopin Competition in Warsaw; records now-legendary Chopin recital for EMI.

1966: Makes US debut.

1967: Records Prokofiev No 3 and Ravel G major concertos with Claudio Abbado and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (DG). Chopin No 1 and Liszt No 1 concertos with Abbado and the LSO (also DG) released the following year.

1969: Marries conductor Charles Dutoit and has daughter, Annie. The marriage lasts until 1973.

1975: Birth of Stéphanie, her daughter with Stephen Kovacevich.

1980: Scales down her solo performances, preferring concertos and chamber music.

1980: Leaves jury of the Chopin Competition in protest when Ivo Pogorelich is eliminated in third round.

1990: Diagnosed with malignant melanoma. Undergoes treatment then and in 1995.

2001: Begins 'Progetto Martha Argerich' at the Lugano Festival where established and young musicians perform side by side.

2012: Premiere of Stéphanie Argerich's film, *Argerich*.

Compiled by Jessica Duchen

© Werner Neumeister/Warner Classics (opposite); © Adriano Heitmann/Warner Classics (this page)

ARGERICH AT THE PIANO, THEN AND NOW

'It was a pivotal moment for me,' Montero explains. 'I was basically ready to quit music and go into psychology. I was 31; I had a lot of doubts about the lifestyle of the concert pianist. Martha had always been not only someone I loved as an artist, but someone I was bewildered by, as a woman, as a mother, as a personality. It was my concern about the huge sacrifices we have to make as women, as artists and as mothers that drove me to go and speak to her. I wanted her to dispel all my doubts.'

Argerich asked Montero to play to her. 'The next night after her rehearsal with Ivry Gitlis – which didn't end until about 1.30am! – we found a practice room and I played for her. I ended up playing Schumann and Beethoven, and improvising. She loved this improvisation – she had a sentimental attachment to it because of her teacher, Friedrich Gulda – and anything that's creative, spontaneous, real, risk-taking, she adores. Her reaction was so incredibly motivating and supportive of me that it basically changed the course of the rest of my life.'

Montero says her encounter with Argerich gave her the confidence to follow her own path, with improvisation at its core. 'She gave me that sense of approval, I guess, of daring to say I'm going to do this my way, no matter what the classical establishment says. That was wonderful, because that's the only way we can be ourselves; not parts of ourselves, but 100 per cent of our totality as artists and as human beings. That was an incredible act of generosity and what followed was an incredible amount of support, telling people about what I did. She really got me off my butt, and that was it – ever since, I've been on this crazy ride!'

ON THIS ISSUE'S CD

Martha Argerich plays Chopin's Scherzo No 3, Schumann's 'The Poet Speaks' and the last movement of the Ravel Concerto in G. Find full details on the CD cover.

At times, Argerich's own career has been just as much of a 'crazy ride'. She may have what seems a divinely inspired gift, but – as Montero rightly detected – the complexities that have affected her on matters away from music are many and thorny.

THE RAW STORY

Martha Argerich was born in Buenos Aires in 1941 and was a child prodigy; her family moved to Vienna when she was in her teens so that she could study with Friedrich Gulda. Before she shot to victory at the Chopin Competition in 1965, she was much affected by inner conflicts, performing stress and more, and had stopped giving concerts for a couple of years. Desperately self-critical, she often cancels concerts at short notice, and many years ago she gave up solo recitals, preferring to share a stage with her friends and colleagues.

Her generosity to these friends and colleagues is unstinting. The Italian pianist Gabriele Baldocci, who teaches at Trinity Laban and has performed with Argerich at Lugano, recounts her role in establishing the career of no less a figure than Claudio Abbado: 'Abbado was a piano student at first,' he says, 'and they met in Gulda's class. When Martha was to make her recording for DG of the Chopin and Liszt concertos, the story goes that they asked her who she would like to conduct it and she suggested him. They went with it.' And they never looked back.

Occasionally Argerich will perform a solo piece in public as part of a larger programme of chamber music. Montero recalls hearing her play Schumann's *Kinderszenen* in Lugano: 'After a few minutes I was sobbing so much I had to go out of the hall,' she remembers. 'A lot of artists play the piano, but Martha *lives* it. She tells us her secrets, her stories, her fears, her courage and everything that's inside her, and her regrets, in such an honest way that it's impossible not to be moved by this great woman – who at the same time is so vulnerable and so fragile in a certain way, despite her strength.' [You can hear Argerich perform 'The Poet Speaks' from *Kinderszenen* on this issue's covermount CD.]

Stéphanie, her daughter with Kovacevich, tells the family story in artistically framed yet raw, personal detail in her film *Argerich*. Almost inevitably, the film reveals conflicting loyalties to art and to family; the fraught yet loving relationships between the diverse members of this extraordinary family. It traces the difficulties of Argerich's own background, with an adoring father and a somewhat unstable mother, who kidnapped Argerich's eldest daughter, Lyda, from a children's home to which she was sent after Argerich lost custody of her.

Kovacevich acknowledges that it is not easy viewing for him, or for Argerich, and that there are one or two scenes 'over which I'm not opening the champagne,' but adds, 'I'm proud of my daughter for having made it. It confronts things, maybe too much, but it's interesting, it's not a PR film and it's not bullshit.'

Stéphanie says the film partly represents her efforts to try to understand her own family. 'My mother is still a mystery after the film,' she remarks. 'But even if you see her in pyjamas and you learn things about her life that are shocking or disturbing, I think you understand her also. That's the impression I get from the people who

p.14, left-right: © Alex von Koettlitz/Warner Classics; © Warner Classics
p.15 top-bottom: © Aline Paley/Verbier Festival; © Marco Caselli Nirmal/DG; Courtesy Gabriela Montero

saw the film – they see this combination of mixed feelings and contradictions that she is, and that's how it is. I really think she's a mystery to herself.'

Part of the complexity could be attributed to Argerich's prodigy years. 'Being basically a genius at three, everything is affected around you, including your relationship with your parents,' Stéphanie says. 'You're not only a little girl; you're also a genius. And that's the whole problem with a wunderkind because they probably don't know if they are loved because they are these little geniuses or just because they're loved. That's a huge question to grow up with and I think it sticks to you all your life.'

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Martin Engstroem, director of the Verbier Festival and former senior executive producer at the Deutsche Grammophon record label, has known Argerich since he was 16, and has taken a leading role in her recording life. 'She's never too keen about recordings – it has to be right, it has to feel right and it has to be with the right partners,' he says. 'The best recordings I think are the ones which were last minute.

'I remember one completely crazy situation when she ran into Mikhail Pletnev in Verbier. He had adapted the *Nutcracker Suite* for two pianos and sent it to her; they were supposed to play it together somewhere, but she pulled out. Then they met in Verbier; she felt bad she had not been able to go through with it, so they were talking, and I said: "Why don't you record it?" She said, "When?" I said, "Tomorrow night!" Pletnev was free – and Martha agreed. I managed to find a studio, got my team together from Hamburg, they started a little before midnight and at 6am the record was ready! It's challenging repertoire, but it's an amazing recording. I feel that this sort of spontaneous music-making is when she's at her strongest.

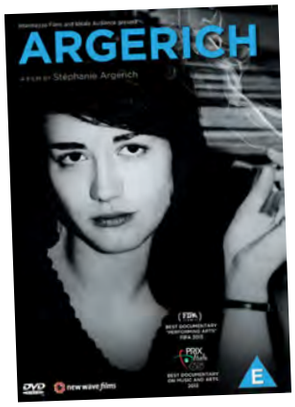
'I don't think she ever listens to her recordings. I think she's not really interested in the past or the future, but in what's happening *today*: is her family OK, are her friends OK, is she doing a concert tonight. I know very few people who think about others as much as she does; she's constantly concerned about her friends and their well-being and she has an enormous heart. I think everybody who gets close to her is grateful for being her friend.'

Argerich remains a frequent visitor to Verbier. 'She really got out of her comfort zone there to learn new repertoire and to work with musicians she'd never worked with before,' says Engstroem. 'Over the years she met [pianist Evgeny] Kissin in Verbier, she started working with [violist Yuri] Bashmet, she played with Pletnev, with [violinist] Gil Shaham; the list is long. Whenever she is here she goes to at least one concert every day – she is very supportive of her colleagues. Her presence here is just overwhelming, both for the musicians and for the public.' What about her cancellations? 'Our relationship is so close that I'm happy if she plays and if she cancels it's fine,' he says. 'I never put any pressure on her. As a friend I accept that that's how she is.'

'Listening to Argerich,' he adds, 'you really hear somebody who has lived. You hear somebody who has gone through so many things in her life, good and bad; all that is spread out in front of you and she's so naked in her way of playing that it becomes very emotional. It's just magic: even if you've heard her play Beethoven's First Concerto 50 times, no two performances are the same. And that's what makes it so exciting to hear her – you never are let off the hook. She grabs you and she holds you fast.'

One question can't help but rear up among Argerich's fans. Will she ever give a solo recital again? I ask Kovacevich what he thinks. 'I don't think she wants to and I don't think she will,' he says.

We can only keep hoping. In the meantime, we are lucky to have Martha Argerich at all. ■



HEAR ARGERICH

Martha Argerich appears at the Wigmore Hall, London, on 2 November, as part of Stephen Kovacevich's 75th birthday concert. Recent Argerich releases include Deutsche Grammophon's 48-CD set – Martha Argerich: The Complete Recordings (DG 00028947946472) and Warner Classics' Martha Argerich and Friends Live from Lugano 2014 (Warner Classics 0825646134601, 3 discs). Her Carte Blanche CD (DG 479 5096, 2 discs) is Editor's Choice in this issue's CD Reviews.

WIN 'ARGERICH'

Turn to page 4 to find out how to win a DVD of Stéphanie Argerich's behind-the-scenes film *Argerich*.

ARGERICH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Bowing on stage with Stephen Kovacevich

Mother and daughter: with toddler Stéphanie Argerich

Happy collaborators: making music with Claudio Abbado

Cheek to cheek with Gabriela Montero

Beyond the keyboard
PRACTISING WITHOUT THE PIANO

Add a new dimension to your playing by developing your 'mind's ear'. Allow pianist and teacher **Mark Tanner** to be your guide to 'virtual practice' – and leave your keyboard behind

We live in an increasingly virtual world, with smartphones, Xbox games, social networking and myriad internet-based activities. All of this can keep us from communicating with each other in person. In this virtual world, listening to music has become a more disengaged activity – people under the age of 40 seem to go about their daily lives with earphones permanently wedged in.

And yet, music has always been virtual in the sense that it has both the real, auditory experience and an imagined existence, that is the 'mind's ear'. Playwrights and novelists don't need to physically hear or see their characters when writing because they have evolved a meaningful virtual stage for their protagonists to act out their roles. Likewise, when we read a story, we build up an imaginary world that is meaningful to us. It doesn't matter that our homemade characters may be somewhat different from the writer's – the point is, we take our image-based virtual world for granted as a basic human experience, one which can captivate children from as young as three years old.

Acquiring a reliable mind's ear seems to pose an inordinately more challenging prospect for many pianists, requiring considerable effort and determination to build. Why might a pianist wish to cultivate such an attribute? An ability to disappear into one's own musical imagination is the key to so many of the skills we pianists cherish, such as improvising and memorising. Importantly, it also opens the window to practising away from the piano, and this is not as abstract an idea as many seem to think. Being able to hear music in one's head completely alters the way a pianist works, thinks and develops. I'm always quick to point out that Beethoven's deafness, while tragically life-changing, had nothing to do with his genius per se; the vast majority of trained performers and conductors are also able to access their own virtual world, though admittedly composers are perhaps especially endowed in this respect.

When you hold a page of sheet music in your hand, how much of it can you hear in your head? If you sit silently in a comfy chair, can you 'play' your favourite piano piece from start to finish, with all the subtleties and nuances you wish it to have? If you can answer yes to both questions, then you are already in possession of an advanced mind's ear, yet there will likely be much more you can do to exploit it. If, in contrast, you struggle to trace out the simplest nursery rhyme in your mind, even when divested of its harmony, then your personal journey towards acquiring the skill to practise away from the piano will need a more diligent, patient approach.

Aural training plays a large role in learning to practise virtually. Although aural training has found its way into graded exams and music courses, in my opinion it remains undervalued, and it underpins so many elements of piano playing. While pianists do not have to concern themselves with tuning, in the way that singers or wind and brass players do, there is much still to internalise if the playing is to have a musical direction and impact.

Mark Tanner is a pianist, writer and composer. For ABRSM he is an examiner, reader and trainer, having undertaken 25 international tours to all five continents. For Spartan Press Mark has published over 50 volumes of compositions and arrangements. Five of his pieces feature in the current Trinity College piano syllabus – *The Owl and the Pussycat* (Grade 1) and *The Wit and Wisdom of the Night* (Grade 6) are now hot favourites! This summer Mark taught on the Chetham's International Piano Summer School and at Jackdaws, Somerset. Find out more at www.marktanner.info

In this article, I will outline a couple of strategies for developing your mind's ear, one to get you going if you happen to feel less naturally endowed when internalising sound, and the other designed to coax out your more refined skillset.

Ghosting

Start by choosing a score with a passage of music that is troubling you. Before playing a single note of the passage on the piano, close the lid, place the score on the stand and 'ghost' the passage by tapping it incisively onto the wood. It may be necessary to do this slowly and hands separately, depending on the stage you have reached with the passage in question. The skill of hearing what you are doing internally will evolve bit by bit if you persevere. If you feel like singing out loud as you play, that may well help.

After each ghosting session, pause, breathe a few times and consider what just took place. Try not to allow yourself to restart until you are good and ready; after all, practising without a concrete idea of what you are attempting to fix is a contradiction in terms, regardless of whether notes are physically sounded. Having ghosted through the section a handful of times, see if you can detect any recurrent shortcomings in the playing itself, such as unsafe coordination, unevenness or hurrying.

5 TOP TIPS — GHOST PRACTISING

1. Start by 'ghosting' tricky passages on the piano lid and 'hearing' them internally. Move on to playing short white-note melodies, checking intervals with the piano as necessary.
2. Introduce chords gradually, beginning with simple triads, before adding inversions, sevenths and other colour notes. Next, weave them into cadences and more elaborate patterns.
3. Pick out key strands of music from the score when you are away from the piano. 'Loop' around small sections in your head and progress to lengthier sections, movements and entire sonatas.
4. Memorising is the logical culmination of the internalising process, so aim to evolve both skills in parallel.
5. When the music you are learning 'lives' an internal life in your mind's ear, things are moving in the right direction. From here, focus on effecting intricate finger movements and less on staring at the score.

This is achieved by feel as much as by the sound of your fingers striking the lid, so listen intently, harness your sensory awareness and respond decisively.

If your ghosting is uneven, your real playing will be too, so there is much valuable work to be done with the lid closed. Try to position your fingers as they will be on the keyboard by imagining the precise spacing of black-and-white notes lying directly under the lid. Glance down from time to time to monitor how your hands are shaped and try to eradicate any ungainly, jerky finger movements one by one. At all times remain calm in your mind and relaxed in your body.

This brief ghosting exercise may have taken you perhaps five minutes, and though it may seem a little austere as a method of waking up your mind and fingers, it is arguably going to be the most useful part of your session. When finally you open the lid and prepare to play the passage for real, the slate is still clean, yet you have already begun to develop an important new skill. You should find yourself unusually zoned in and aware of what is happening. Each movement of the fingers will feel extra supple, while your muscular memory should seem noticeably more responsive. The sound you make will be more vivid, alive and controlled.

Now open the lid and play a three-note melody on the white notes – nothing too lengthy – then immediately replay it in your mind. Aim to mentally reproduce the articulation and dynamic shape you used, even the sound quality of the individual notes your instrument possesses. Repeat the melody continually as a loop, then play out loud on the piano to check you have internalised it correctly. If any of the played intervals sounds different from your internalised version, repeat the two notes in question several times on the piano before replaying them in your mind. Counting the scale steps between the two notes is a good way of refining this, aided by the piano if need be.

Using the mind's ear

Once you have begun to acquire a level of dependability, you will quickly see the potential for internalising more elaborate melodic figures taken from the music you are currently learning. If the composer alters recurrences of the melody in some way, perhaps by stretching an interval or adapting its rhythmic shape, take care to work internally to distinguish each version and avoid confusion when you come to assemble the whole piece. Bit by bit you will develop the inner ear and streamline the connections to your fingers. From here you can begin to add the simplest of bass notes – feed yourself a basic version of the notated accompaniment, working at it note by note, just as you did with the melody. Played in combination, the two parts may take many attempts to gel in your mind, but be patient and particularly mindful of cadences, which function as important turning points in the music.

It is with chords that the mind's ear will really have its work cut out at first, for these have harmonic as well as textural dimensions, both of which need to be accessible to you in your head as well as in your fingers if you are going to be able to practise the piano while walking for a bus or waiting for the kettle to boil. As before, sit at the piano, transferring the simplest of major/minor triads from the piano to your mind and back again, before slowly attaching a fourth note, such as the second, sixth or seventh.

Inversions, which may involve one or more of these added notes, can be tackled next, followed by two chords coupled together – start with a perfect cadence. If you build this new skill into your daily practice, you will likely find that snatches of the music you are working on come to you as if by magic when you least expect them to. Keep triangulating this process, coordinating the score, the piano and your mind, so that an ever-clearer picture crystallises.

Once the mind has become a faithful mirror of the sounds you physically produce at the piano, you will have effectively created a whole new world. It is really only once you have reached this point that the business of practising away from the piano can become a reality. You'll start focusing more and more on the fingers themselves, their subtlest movements in running and chordal passages, as well as on increasingly more ambitious traversing of the keyboard, incorporating leaps and ever-more elaborate figurations such as those found in more linear, contrapuntal music.

Memorising, although a topic unto itself, is one obvious skill to benefit from the process of internalising the music you are learning. If we think of memorising as simply an extension of learning, it stands to reason it is best done fragment by fragment, following the process I have outlined. Bear in mind that memorising the music is not the same as locking it securely into the fingers, yet if you make internalising and table-tapping a regular part of your learning routine, then you will soon be able to pick up where you left off, sitting in the bath or wherever you might be! ■

In the next issue Mark Tanner discusses rhythm and the use of the metronome.

When you look at a page of sheet music, how much of it can you hear in your head? If you sit silently in a chair, can you 'play' your favourite piece from start to finish? If so, then you already have an advanced 'mind's ear' – but there is still more you can do

PIANO-FREE PRACTICE

Mark Tanner's advice for virtual practising on 3 of the pieces in this issue's Scores

1 **Kember *Le Carbet*** [Scores page 30]: This is a fun Latin number with a typical rhythmic pattern shared between the hands, so 'beguine' with this as a coordination exercise to get it firmly in your head and fingers. Once you've got the measure of its harmonic design, you'll be well underway. The LH repeats a minim and two crotchets pattern throughout, which will feel so much easier if you adopt a sensible fingering (I'd use 1-2-5 on the D-G-D and on similar variants, rather than 1-5-5). The melody needs to be ultra-smooth – a lovely legato line to practise on the table top as you lodge it into your mental piano!

2 **CPE Bach *La Caroline*** [Scores page 32]: This is an excellent early Classical piece to work at away from the piano. The LH mostly plays easily traceable repeated notes throughout, so use this to your advantage when getting it under your fingers. Break down the RH part into small, digestible chunks and take care to compare different versions (e.g. bars 1-4 and 43-46), especially when they occur in unusual keys (B flat major, bar 55).

3 **Chaminade *Automne*** [Scores page 56]: Funnily enough, the harder a piece is to learn, the easier it often seems to memorise, so keep this in mind as you tackle this meaty piece! I'd advise plenty of LH practice at first, mainly to help with internalising its harmonic framework, then begin piecing together the main melodic line (mostly comprising quavers) and combine it with the left. Next tackle the 'molto agitato' section, which will probably be quite a project to internalise, but it will help to sketch in each of the bold shifts in key. Essentially, the music here is centred first in A flat major, then A major (but 'spelled' differently), then back to A flat, which is the piece's dominant key – and hey presto, finally to the home key of D flat.

Liberate your technique!
FOREARM ROTATION

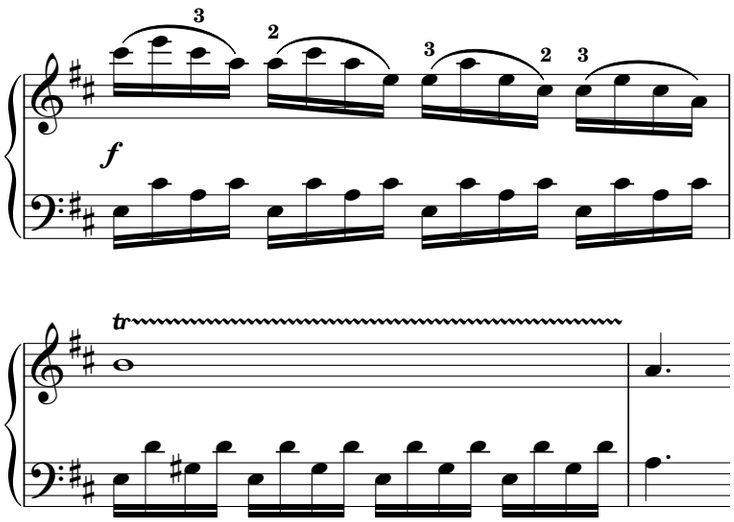
Forearm rotation can be a great source of power and freedom for your playing. Discover how you can tap into this technique most usefully with advice from teacher and performer **Graham Fitch**

Every serious pianist needs fantastic fingers – strong, fast and agile – but fingers are not the whole story. We can reach a very high level of proficiency using our fingers but virtuosity is not possible without a coordinated blend of activity between the fingers and the wrist, forearm, upper arm and shoulders. General posture and how the torso balances on the sitting bones are also of great significance.

In this article I will discuss forearm rotation, a terrific source of power and freedom that is often untapped or incorrectly understood and applied. Discovering rotation is a liberating experience; we find we are able to move quickly and loosely within any given dynamic range. Passages that were a struggle suddenly feel coordinated and effortless when we allow the forearm to assist the finger in controlling the key, and a surprising benefit is that all fingers can feel equally strong.

Historically there has been a lot of focus on training the pianist by over-developing isolated up-and-down movements of the fingers within a fixed hand. When we play with piston fingers like this we employ the flexor and extensor muscles of the forearm, but these small, delicate muscles tire easily and are not so good for strong activities when endurance is called for. This technique suited the harpsichord and early pianos adequately, but as pianos got bigger and heavier (and the music written for them became increasingly more difficult) players became injured by it. They eventually realised they had to come up with better ways of managing the keyboard – involving more participation from the arm.

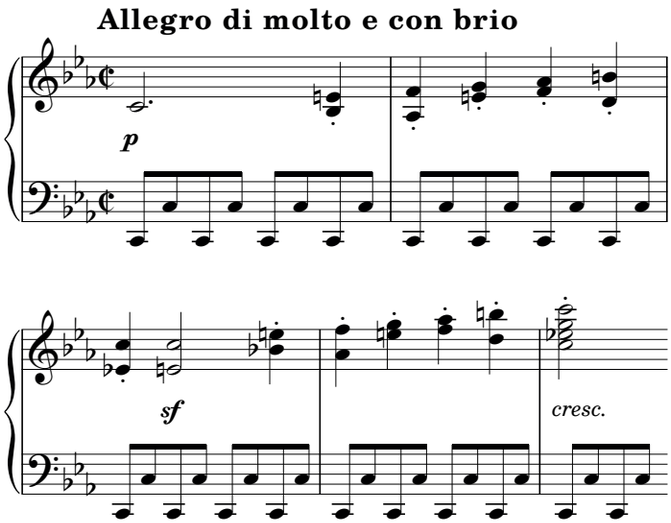
Forearm rotation is a simple and natural turning movement of the hand and forearm as one unit. Imagine you are using a screwdriver or turning a door knob and you've got it. As you experience rotation at the keyboard, you'll feel how the fingers lift not by themselves but because of the bigger, stronger muscles that twist the forearm. We'll get on to more sophisticated ways of experiencing forearm rotation in a moment, but let's first look at examples of where this is most obvious – such as trills and tremolos, broken thirds and octaves, and Alberti basses. The example below from Mozart's Sonata in D K284 is a typical Classical period cadential trill with an Alberti bass – forearm rotation (rather than finger power) is what we need here in both hands:



WATCH GRAHAM ONLINE

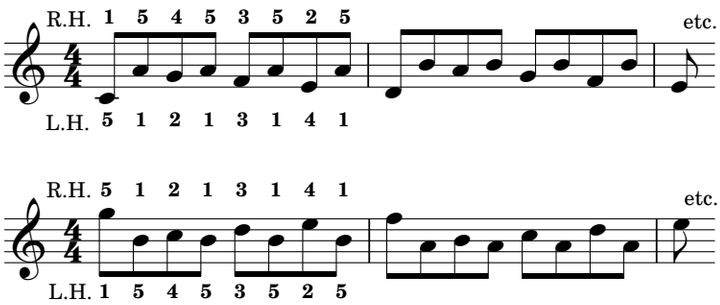
Don't miss Graham Fitch's video lessons, which you'll find on the *Pianist* website at www.pianistmagazine.com. Graham demonstrates everything that he discusses on these pages – and more. His current lessons are filmed at Steinway Hall, London, on a Model D concert grand. There's nothing like watching the expert!

It would be perverse *not* to use rotation on the LH tremolo at the start of the Allegro molto in the first movement of Beethoven's 'Pathétique' Sonata opus 13:



To develop the correct technique for the tremolo, let's start with the LH alone. Firstly, play the C octave with both notes together. While holding onto the fifth finger (which acts as a hinge), repeat the thumb note rhythmically a few times. As you allow the forearm to rotate, the thumb will swing upwards into the air before it engages with the key. As you bounce the thumb, keep the elbow in one spot – it mustn't wiggle from side to side as it might want to do. Now hold onto the thumb note and – keeping that elbow in one place – rotate towards the fifth finger a few times. You'll probably have noticed the range of motion on the fifth finger side is smaller than on the thumb side. Don't worry, as this is quite normal and you will develop flexibility over time. Now play the tremolo rather slowly, making sure to keep it rhythmical. Aim to keep the range of motion equal as you swing one way and then the other. As you bring the tremolo up to the tempo, the movement becomes smaller and smaller. The fingers need to be firm enough to support what the forearm is doing but they don't generate the power for key depression.

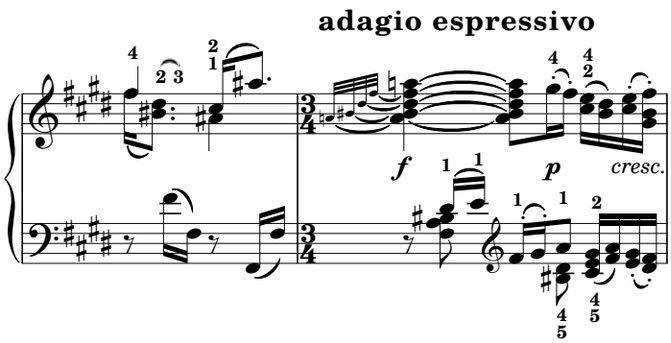
To develop basic rotary freedom, I recommend this simple exercise:



If you view my online video demonstration, you'll notice I am making small in/out adjustments along the length of the key to accommodate the difference in length between the short fingers (thumb and 5) and the long ones (2, 3 and 4). It would be a squash if my long fingers got tangled up in the black key area of the white keys and I would need to over-bend them if I stayed in. To avoid the discomfort and tension this would cause, I slide outwards (towards my body) to engage fingers 2, 3 or 4 with the front part of the white keys. Because my thumb and 5 are now slightly off the keyboard, when I need them again, I slide forwards (towards the fallboard) to bring these short fingers into place. If I don't make this adjustment, I will need to twist my hand, producing tension and potential injury. (This movement is more pronounced when thumb and 5 are needed on black keys.) As I land in each key, I sense how the finger is supporting the hand and the arm: everything is balanced and aligned. When practising this super-slowly, it might be helpful to exaggerate the range of the motion but remember two things: 1) time the rotations to happen quickly and at the last moment, and 2) the hand must immediately return to a place of equilibrium (palm facing to the floor, not tilted to the right or the left).

After you have gained some fluency, transpose this exercise into a variety of different keys. When you include black notes in the pattern, the in-out sliding adjustments will be bigger and there will also be some small adjustments up and down. This is because of an obvious (but often overlooked) fact about the piano keyboard – the black keys are higher up and further away! Remember to check the elbow remains calm on the vertical plain, with no jerky movements from side to side. As you progress up and down the keyboard the arm will of course glide outwards and inwards horizontally. Generate each motion from the forearm and not from the fingers themselves. The fingers need to be active and firm enough to support the forearm activity – they are fully alive, just not in the driver's seat. Enjoy the feeling of total freedom in the arm; this should feel really good!

Until I studied forearm rotation with a student of Dorothy Taubman, I had not appreciated how useful it was in situations other than the obvious trills and Alberti patterns. I had a eureka moment when I applied rotations to the broken diminished seventh in the Adagio espressivo section of the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata opus 109:

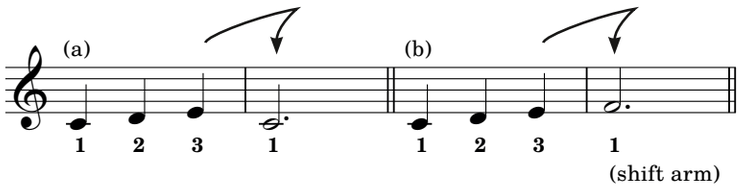


I was struggling to get enough power in this section, especially because I needed to hold onto the notes of the chord during the spread. When I was able to switch on the rotary movements, it suddenly became effortless and strong. At first it seemed unfeasible that the forearm could control these movements at speed, but the tiny backflips of the forearm were absolutely possible. The difference in sensation between the rotary version and the fingery version was enormous.

The power for scales and scale passages, too, can come from the forearm working in conjunction with the fingers. But before we go any further, we need to investigate the direction of the rotation.

There are two ways of experiencing this, and it is most important to get it right. The movement where the palm drops inwards and downwards is known as *pronation*; *supination* is where the palm moves outwards and upwards. When it comes to fingers 2, 3 and 4, the context determines whether we use a pronation or a supination. It is a supination when we rotate to the pinky, but when the fifth finger is combined with the thumb in an interval or chord the direction will always be a pronation towards the thumb. The rule to remember is every time the thumb is involved the movement is always a pronation.

In a scale pattern the pronation toward the thumb takes a bit of getting used to, as the movement may be in the opposite direction of travel and it will feel counterintuitive at first. Try the simple exercise below: the rotations should feel the same between the third finger and thumb in both situations. The only difference is the outward arm shift as you swing the thumb into the F in (b). See my online video demonstration, and don't forget to apply it to the LH also:



To apply the rotations to a scale pattern, there's one more bit of theory we need to be clear on – the difference between a double and a single rotation. A single rotation is the sort we use when two fingers move in opposite directions (such as an Alberti pattern, trill, etc.). When fingers move in the same direction we need to use a double rotation. This involves making a small preparatory rotation in the opposite direction of travel before swinging into the key. Even though a double rotation is made up of two movements, it should actually feel like one continuous motion. Since written instructions are complex and open to misunderstanding, please refer to my video tutorial to understand the difference between single and double rotations and how to map out a scale in this way.

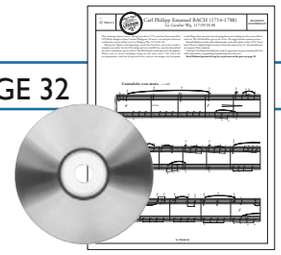
Forearm rotation is a very specific aspect of technique. There is nothing vague about it. The term is often used when people mean something else (such as circular movements of the arm, for example). As we study the rotary movements, we might need to slightly exaggerate them at first; as we play we allow them to merge with other movements until we scarcely notice they are there. Rotation does not replace finger activity; it helps fingers to move more freely. It is like the oil that lubricates an engine so that all the parts work seamlessly together as one. Think of rotation as an underlying component of much of what we do at the keyboard, often running in the background rather than in plain view.

In my next article I will explore some more uses of forearm rotation. I think you will be very surprised how using the technique of forearm rotation will improve accuracy while keeping you physically free and helping associated difficulties melt away. ■

In the next issue Graham explores the use of forearm rotation to manage leaps, shifts and position changes.

Graham Fitch is a pianist, teacher, writer and adjudicator. He gives masterclasses and workshops on piano playing internationally, and is in high demand as a private teacher in London. A regular tutor at the Summer School for Pianists in Walsall, Graham is also a tutor for the Piano Teachers' Course EPTA (UK). He writes a popular piano blog, www.practisingthepiano.com.

FULL SCORE ON PAGE 32



CPE BACH
La Caroline

This charming piece is all about expressive nuances, elegant shaping and tone production. Teacher and author **Melanie Spanswick** reveals what you need to know to play it effectively

Ability rating Beginner/ Intermediate

Info
Key: A minor
Tempo: Cantabile con moto
Style: Classical

Will improve your
✓ Legato
✓ Cantabile
✓ Tonal control

Melanie Spanswick is a classical pianist, teacher, adjudicator, author and presenter. She regularly conducts workshops and masterclasses in Germany as well as for EPTA (European Piano Teachers Association). She adjudicates for the British and International Federation of Festivals and curates the Classical Conversations Series, where she interviews eminent classical pianists on camera. These interviews are published on YouTube. Her book, *So You Want To Play The Piano?* has been critically acclaimed.
Find out more about Melanie at www.melaniespanswick.com

CPE Bach's *La Caroline* is a little study in the use of dynamic colour and tone production. It is an exquisite work that requires excellent control of the keyboard, despite its fairly slow tempo and generally static bass. I have suggested the speed of crotchet equals 60 beats per minute, but it's also important to keep in mind that very slow speeds can hamper phrasing and musical line. Select a reasonably moderate tempo that permits appropriate musical shape and definition.

Fingering is crucial for *La Caroline*. Judiciously chosen fingering encourages fluent legato and all manner of note 'joining', whether for single or double notes. I've written some suggested fingering in the score. Aim to be secure with your fingering before working musically. Separate hand practice provides the best results.

Practise line by line, working assiduously at double notes such as those in the right hand (RH) in the first four bars. These bars require careful voicing because they essentially introduce the counterpoint, where one part or musical line will always need more sound and colour. When negotiating the first four bars, practise the top line alone (E, F, G♯ and A). In order to achieve a smooth, even phrase, turn your hand outwards slightly, so your arm weight supports the outer part of the hand (towards the fourth and fifth fingers, and away from the thumb). Once supported, it can produce a richer timbre, particularly if combined with flexible movement in the wrist and arm. When this has been mastered, introduce the lower parts (C, D, B and C), playing them lightly and as legato as possible. Don't forget that the top line must ideally reign supreme dynamically.

In the second bar, aim to turn your RH sufficiently so as to join the notes effectively. A free wrist and forearm will encourage this movement. The hand will need to turn over the fifth finger (in bar 2) in order to 'reach' the fourth finger in bar 3 to play the G♯. Keep your fifth finger attached to the F until the G♯, played by the fourth finger, is almost sounding (overlapping) before letting go. Grade the sound, so the G♯ is slightly louder than the F, conforming to the crescendo marking.

Achieve a totally smooth line, and tone control will be that much easier. It's best to allow fingers to do the work as opposed to using too much pedal (I have included very few pedal markings on the score). All double notes and part-playing will benefit from this kind of practice throughout *La Caroline*.

There are two distinct textures in this piece. First, the melody, which usually appears in the RH, then the accompaniment in the left hand (LH). The melodic line requires plenty of sound definition, while the accompaniment must be soft and light, but supporting where needed.

Notice the 'Cantabile' marking at the start. 'Cantabile' means 'in a singing style', and to produce a singing style, use arm weight alongside having complete freedom in the upper body. In bars 5-8, the phrasing in the melody is detailed, and sound production should be continuous and fluid, even though the first notes of bars 5 and 7 require short articulation (staccatissimo).

Support the fifth finger by using a rotational wrist motion, producing a rich tone on the C in bar 5, releasing it for a millisecond before continuing. The following E, F and E only need a slight nuance (or crescendo followed by a decrescendo within the three-note phrase), again with a free wrist motion on the acciaccatura (G) and following note (F). The acciaccatura must be light and expressive but not too hurried, as if just stroking the key.

At the end of bar 5 and beginning of bar 6, there can be a tiny break in the sound. That's where the third finger takes over from the thumb on the E, before tapering off beautifully on the D♯. The E needs more sound than the D♯. Aim to grade the sound evenly here, with a 'drop-roll' motion. This piece is all about expressive nuances and elegant shaping, so experiment by finding various ways of highlighting each phrase in this manner.

Learning Tip

Articulate semiquaver patterns in the melody with clarity and precision, changing the sound instead of tempo for expressive effect

The LH accompaniment will benefit from good tonal control too. There are many repeated notes in the LH – try to think of them as a rhythmic support for the melody. Although a light, soft touch is necessary, a regular pulse is important. Keep the momentum without adding rubato. The tempo marking (*con moto*) suggests this as well. Listen to the ends of notes ensuring note lengths are all similar. When playing slow repeated patterns, encourage the same even tone for each one, as well as creating a continuous legato.

Make a note of rests. Bars 21, 54, 57 and 58 have deliberate breaks, adding to the dramatic character. A note regarding the pedal: while it can be employed freely for a piece such as this, try to use your fingers to do most of the joining, so that the pedal can be depressed sparingly at the ends of phrases (as I've suggested in the score). Dynamic markings will create suspense, particularly with regards to the *fortissimo* at the end, which brings this sombre yet powerful piece to a poignant close. ■

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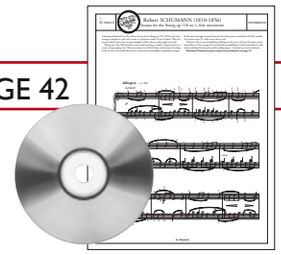

SCHUMANN

Sonata for the Young op 118 no 1, first movement

Challenge your ingrained playing habits with this seemingly simple piece, says teacher and performer **Janet Newman**, who dares you to leave the pedal behind and to let the rests speak

Ability rating Intermediate

Info
Key: G major
Tempo: Allegro
Style: Romantic

Will improve your
✓ Tone control
✓ Finger legato
✓ Dynamics

Schumann composed the three *Sonatas for the Young* in 1853, three years before he died. It was also one year before his admittance, at his own request, to Endenich, a mental asylum near Bonn. Nothing in these works suggest any of the composer's terrible inner turmoil or unrest; they have a naive simplicity and repose that make playing them a pleasure.

Don't be put off by the title. Adults are sometimes put off by the thought of playing works that were ostensibly written for children, but there is plenty of musical material here that will help any player improve their tone control and awareness of legato.

This movement can be played without pedal – you will note there are no pedalling marks on the score. I would suggest that you try to play without the pedal, as it will help make you much more able to use a true finger legato. So often the role of joining notes is assumed by pedalling instead of the fingers, when in fact, you should see pedalling as a device that helps to add texture and depth of sound as well as aiding legato – but not as a substitute.

Structurally, this first movement is in A-B-A form. The middle section of the movement has a motif that recurs a number of times. Usefully, having a recurring motif makes the movement quite possible to memorise: by comparing the ideas and seeing where they differ slightly, you can bring the music off the copy quite easily.

For me, it is second nature to memorise (and I expect my students to do so too). I never feel I really know a piece – or am able to discover it – until the notes are in the fingers and I can listen to it in a way that I don't seem to do if I'm still stuck on the score. If you struggle with this, then just try to memorise four bars at a time and you will likely be surprised by how much material you can actually cope with. As with almost everything in life, it becomes easier with practice.

Janet Newman is Head of Keyboard at the Royal Grammar School in Guildford. In addition to her teaching, she is in demand as a freelance pianist and is an examiner for the ABRSM.

Look at the way Schumann has written for the left hand (LH) in the opening A section. You'll see that there is an implied melody (written with the note tails going down) that takes precedence over the D in the thumb part. Make sure that this is balanced sensitively against the less-important note. One way to do this is to play the melody plus thumb as a pair of notes (like a chord), but to release the thumb as a staccato, while holding onto the lower part and keeping it legato. In other words, you are practising two touches at once, and not letting the thumb part affect the joined, sustained legato line of the melody. This makes you aware of the difference in touch and tone between them, and also helps you to gain control of the hand so that you find you develop the ability to do two things at once within the same hand.

Another way of developing control over this is to practise your scales legato in one hand and staccato in the other. When you reach the top of the scale, swap touches *immediately* for the descending octaves. This is difficult at first and will probably tie you up in knots (and make sure that everybody else in the house is out) but it is really worth persevering with. Mastering it will definitely help you to develop an increasing quickness of response and coordination.

Practise the LH alone for quite a while before adding the right hand (RH). Listen for the grading of the tone and shape of the countermelody so that it becomes fluent and natural. Once you bring the RH in, take care that on the A after the dotted crotchet G in the first bar (and wherever else this happens) that you do not bash this note out. Remember, you are technically playing a percussion instrument. After any longer note when the tone begins to degrade, there is always a strong chance that the following note will be played a lot louder. This is what can cause phrase lines to sound bumpy and unrefined in less-experienced pianists.

In bar 5 and 6, I think the accents are to be leaned on expressively. Avoid the 'overarm smash' school of piano playing here! As much of the first section contains RH and LH melody, you can also practise the section by playing just the two ideas together. You can see this very clearly in bars 7-10 where the writing in the LH is mostly in crotchets. Play the hands together and see how the two ideas interweave and support each other.

In the B section, it is important that the rests speak. See them as exhalations rather than abrupt stops or gaps. You will notice that the phrases fall; each quaver/crotchet motif is written slightly lower than the previous one and there seems to be a feeling of surrender within the music. Perhaps there is also a significance in the fact that the first appearance of the motif in bar 14 is in E minor and then in bar 19, the idea returns in E major. This can be played out slightly more even though they are both marked *forte*, as there is a more positive character to the music which you can express though the dynamics.

Learning Tip

You should see the pedalling as a device that helps to add texture and depth of sound as well as aiding legato – but you should not see it as a substitute

In fact, Schumann doesn't suggest much in the way of dynamic shading in this section apart from *forte*. Explore using some quieter tone – in the answering phrases, for example – in order to give a wider tonal palette to the playing. This may also help to show more of the musical interplay – the 'falling away' that I mentioned earlier.

The main A theme returns at bars 34-35 and the musical material repeats until bar 47 where Schumann has written a small codetta in order to bring the music to a close. Take a little time over this final phrase in order to show the conclusion. As Schumann has quite deliberately written the last three chords as staccato, I suspect that the ending is quite a robust one and as a result, keep the ending pretty much within tempo. ■

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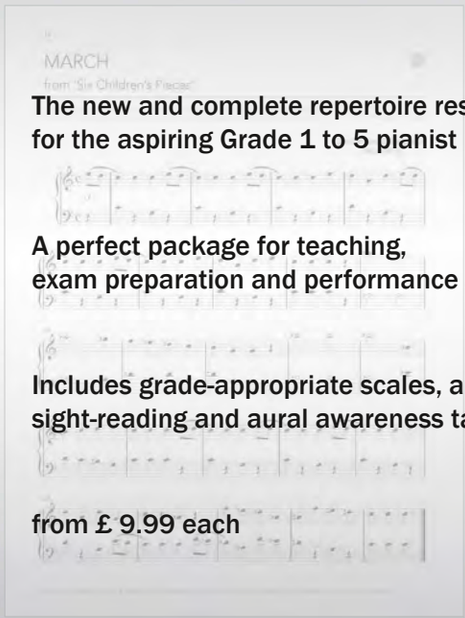

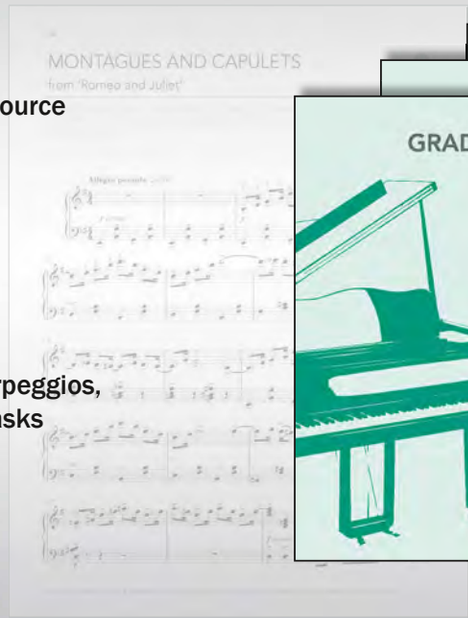

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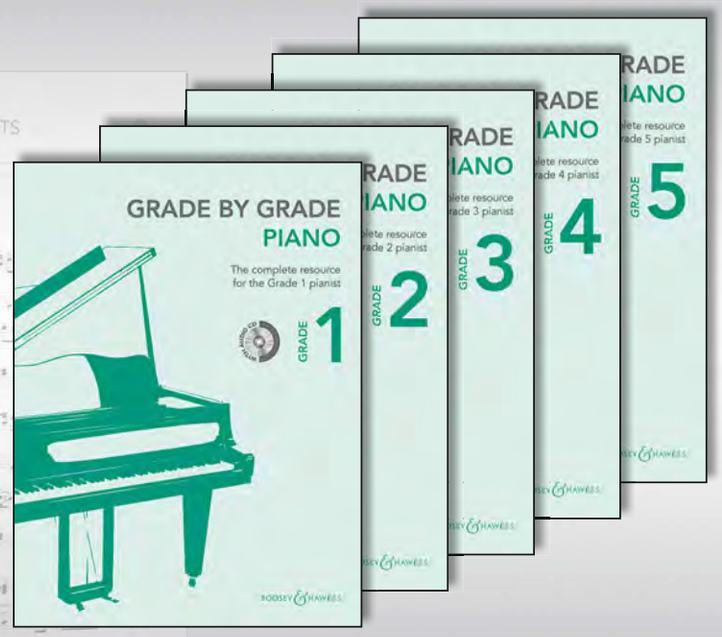

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CÉCILE CHAMINADE

'Automne' op 35 no 2

Discover Chaminade's unjustly neglected music with this romantic gemstone. Follow the advice from concert pianist and teacher **Lucy Parham**, and improve your legato and forearm rotation too!

Ability rating Advanced

Info
Key: D flat major
Tempo: Lento
Style: Romantic

Will improve your
✓ Octave playing
✓ Legato
✓ Flexibility of the wrist/hand

The French composer Cécile Chaminade is one of a handful of female composers whose name is familiar to the classical music-loving public. Chaminade was born in 1857 and died in 1944. She was not only a composer but also a very distinguished pianist, and often toured to England, where she was highly regarded. She wrote a lot of popular and often-played piano music, of which this gem is one. Chaminade was much admired in the first half of the 20th century but sadly she seems to have slipped out of favour in the past 50 years. I remember hearing recordings of *Automne* when I was growing up but you rarely hear it played now, so it is a particular joy to be able to spend some time re-visiting it.

There are three versions of *Automne*. This one is for solo piano, but there is also a duet version and an orchestrated version as well. Once you have begun work on this piece, the melody will linger in your head. It is one of those extremely 'hummable' and romantic melodies (something you also find with Mendelssohn); I've never understood why *Automne* has not regained the popularity that it once had.

The work is in a simple A-B-A format. Within each section there are shorter sub-sections. Although the key of D flat major has five flats, I always find it is a very comfortable key, as the hands tend to fit it like a glove. If you know the Chopin D flat major Prélude ('Raindrop') or his Nocturne and *Berceuse* in the same key, you will understand why I say this about this key. D flat major also has a wonderfully soothing quality about it. In that sense, despite its considerable challenges, this piece is very pianistic, and it is also definitely one for impressing your friends!

My top tip is definitely to learn the climax first. This means you need to go straight to the Con fuoco passage at bar 30. It will help if you have mastered this section first, as it is the most technically challenging part of the piece. There is always something satisfying too, about having learnt the hardest part first!

At the beginning, try to feel the significance of the first upbeat. Count in the whole bar before the upbeat before you begin. This will give you time to imagine the melody you are about to play before you set a finger on the keyboard.

It is important to retain a certain flexibility within the melody at all times. You want to avoid being four square. Play the melody alone with the left hand (LH), avoiding any of the accompanying surrounding quavers and semiquavers, because by doing this you are just taking the skeleton outline of the melody and its bass line.

An overlapping 'into the bed of the key' legato is required at all times. Always try to think of projecting the melody and, at this opening, balancing the accompaniment. This means that you only need a light touch on the semiquaver accompaniment. This is different from the LH quavers in the first few bars. It is almost as if you have four layers at the outset. The first is the melody, then the bass line, followed by the bass accompaniment quavers and finally the right-hand (RH) accompaniment.

At this point you will need to change the pedal almost on every beat. Every time the harmony changes you should change the pedal. When you reach the second half of bar 6 there is a beautiful G♮ in the RH. This is the first time we have had this note and it has a real melodic significance. When you reach 'molto stringendo' at bar 8 the LH assumes an important role (almost as much as the RH) and you will notice this in bar 10 as well.

Bar 13 is an echo of bar 12. That means that in bar 12 you should concentrate on the LH, and in bar 13 concentrate on the beautiful echo in the RH. Bar 14 can have even greater diminuendo to lead you gently into bar 15. We now have the melody in the LH, and although the RH is playing an accompanying role, ensure you bring out the accents in the second half of bar to bars 16 and 17. There is a moment of pure magic at bar 18 (*pp*) where the RH gently takes the melody over from the LH – again, it should be beautifully and subtly achieved.

Learning Tip

Tackle the most technically challenging part first: go straight to the climax beginning at the Con fuoco passage bar 30

At all times concentrate on making the legato line as smooth as possible. It is all too easy to have bumps in this piece. Wherever there is a chance to change your fingers on a note (i.e. finger substitution) to achieve a good legato, you should definitely do it. Unfortunately I do not have the space here to go through every fingering in the piece!

From bar 18 and onwards Chaminade gives the further weight and importance to the LH. The two lines often merge into a duet and the LH should never be relegated to the role of accompanist. Notice the accents in bar 26 and, within a *pp* context, really sink into these notes with the side of your thumb – use your whole forearm to make these notes really ring and project.

Bars 28 and 29 form a little coda before the turbulent central section that begins at bar 30. This is the section I suggested you learn at first. My best advice is to learn these next three lines in blocks of chords, so you know exactly where you are going. It is essential to know the geography of the keyboard: once you have that firmly in your mind you can then look into the technique of

Lucy will perform *Odyssey of Love* at Kings Place, London, on 3 Oct with Henry Goodman and Juliet Stevenson as part of the London Literary Festival. She also performs *Beloved Clara* at the Stratford on Avon Music Festival on 19 Oct with Henry Goodman and Joanna David, and at the Yeovil Festival on 1 Nov with Tim McInnerny and Juliet Stevenson. Her Kings Place Sunday morning series, Word/Play, opens on 6 December with another star-studded amateur pianist concert in Schumann's *Album for the Young*.

For full dates and details, please visit www.lucyparham.com

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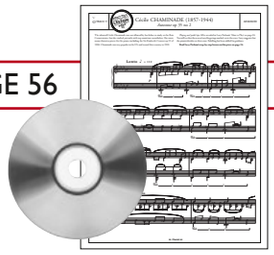
FULL SCORE ON PAGE 56



this passage. In the RH you need a rotation between the thumb of the first semiquaver and the chord of the second semiquaver (played with a 2-4-5 fingering). This small movement will prevent you from tightening up. Think of literally 'shaking it out'. [Read Graham Fitch's masterclass on page 18 on forearm rotation.]

At bar 38, the LH is quite tricky. Again you need to keep your forearm free. It is helpful to think of everything coming from the thumb: it's almost like a circular movement from the thumb down to the fifth finger via the third or second finger. The tempo here is held back a little bit because the composer asks for Poco più largo appassionato. This is in order to space out the line to the climax and make one long sweeping line until bar 46. The RH octaves at bar 38 need to be flexible and not stuck in a rigid four beats in a bar, so try to always get over that barline. The useful technique of practising octaves firstly without the thumb and then secondly without the fifth will really help you here. Always remember to keep the hand open, though, as if you are playing both notes of the octave.

When you reach the *ff* chord at bar 46, use your whole forearm weight to really 'sit' on it. The ensuing demisemiquavers also need a brilliance. The first two (in the RH) almost need a non-legato touch. The final four demisemiquavers of each bar need to be clear and not rushed. To avoid rushing, isolate the last four demisemiquavers of bars 46, 47 and 48 and stopping on the first beat of the next bar. Take them out as an exercise. The beautiful diminuendo in bar 49 requires a steely RH fifth finger, as you don't want to lose the melody, in spite of the quiet dynamic.

Return to 'a Tempo' at bar 50 (pedalling twice per bar to keep the harmony). At bar 52 the stringendo is crucial; it is virtuosic and brilliant, and needs to push ahead. Use the LH to help you. Imagine that the LH is the conductor, and really draw each note out of the keyboard, also making way for the RH. Again, a little rotation between the thumb and chord (i.e. second and third notes of each RH grouping) will help out technically. Use your LH octaves in bars 54 and 55 to add real weight. They should boom!

The final chord (bar 58) here requires real forearm and shoulder weight. Again, you need to 'sit' on it. Observe the 'allargando' ('broadening') in bar 58 and then really launch into the alternating octaves (a hugely effective technique that Liszt frequently employed) at bar 59.

This section also benefits from practising the thumbs and fifths alone. You can even practise the thumbs alone on a table-top to achieve that 'flexible wrist' feeling! Aim for the low F at the beginning of bar 60. The mood here should be one of a cadenza or recitative and mentally you are preparing your listener for the return of the melody. The B♭ quaver needs to be taken with the LH (notice the 'm.g.') and the subsequent three quavers (C, D and E) with the RH. Really pronounce these, and those of the subsequent bar, as the melody is being reiterated strongly for the final time. The following bar requires a real colour and tranquillity to shape it perfectly. Bars 64 and 65 should be even less as if completely melting away. At bar 64, note how the LH crosses over the RH arpeggiated figure in order to play the top A♮. Try not to bang this note out and let it blend in naturally to the rest of the chord. After a long rit, really indulge the pause on the A at bar 65 which is leading you into the final section of this piece via this next short linking passage ('A tempo, molto agitato').

Notice the repeated minim A♭ in the RH in bars 66-68. These notes should sound like beautiful bells and really resonate. Through this crescendo, carefully grade the LH as if you have three levels to climb. You don't want each bar to be the same here.

Bar 69 presents technical challenges, especially in the RH. I suggest you learn the RH in block octave chords (i.e. every two demisemiquavers represents a chord). Then try 'scooping' these in groups of two (i.e. the fifth to the thumb). Keep your wrist flexible at all times, as it is easy to get stuck. The LH at bars 69 and 70 must have full prominence. The main theme is now repeated – we come back to the opening. Do something a little different this time. The arpeggiated final bars should be magical. Melt away and lift the pedal slowly to create a captivating ending. ■

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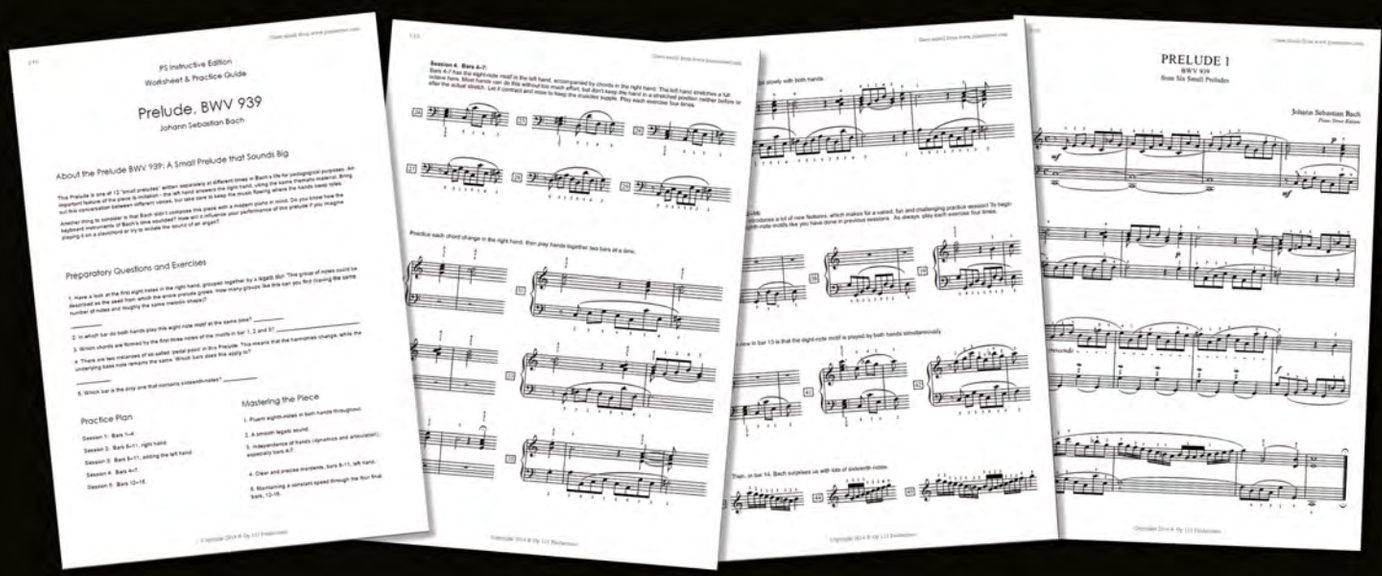

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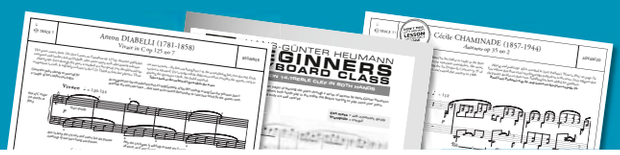

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Quick guide to UK/North American note value terminology

𝅝 = **semibreve**/whole note
𝅗𝅥 = **minim**/half note
♩ = **crotchet**/quarter note
♪ = **quaver**/eighth note
𝅘𝅥𝅯 = **semiquaver**/16th note
𝅘𝅥𝅰 = **demisemiquaver**/32nd note

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TRACK 1

Anton DIABELLI (1781-1858)

Vivace in C op 125 no 7

BEGINNER

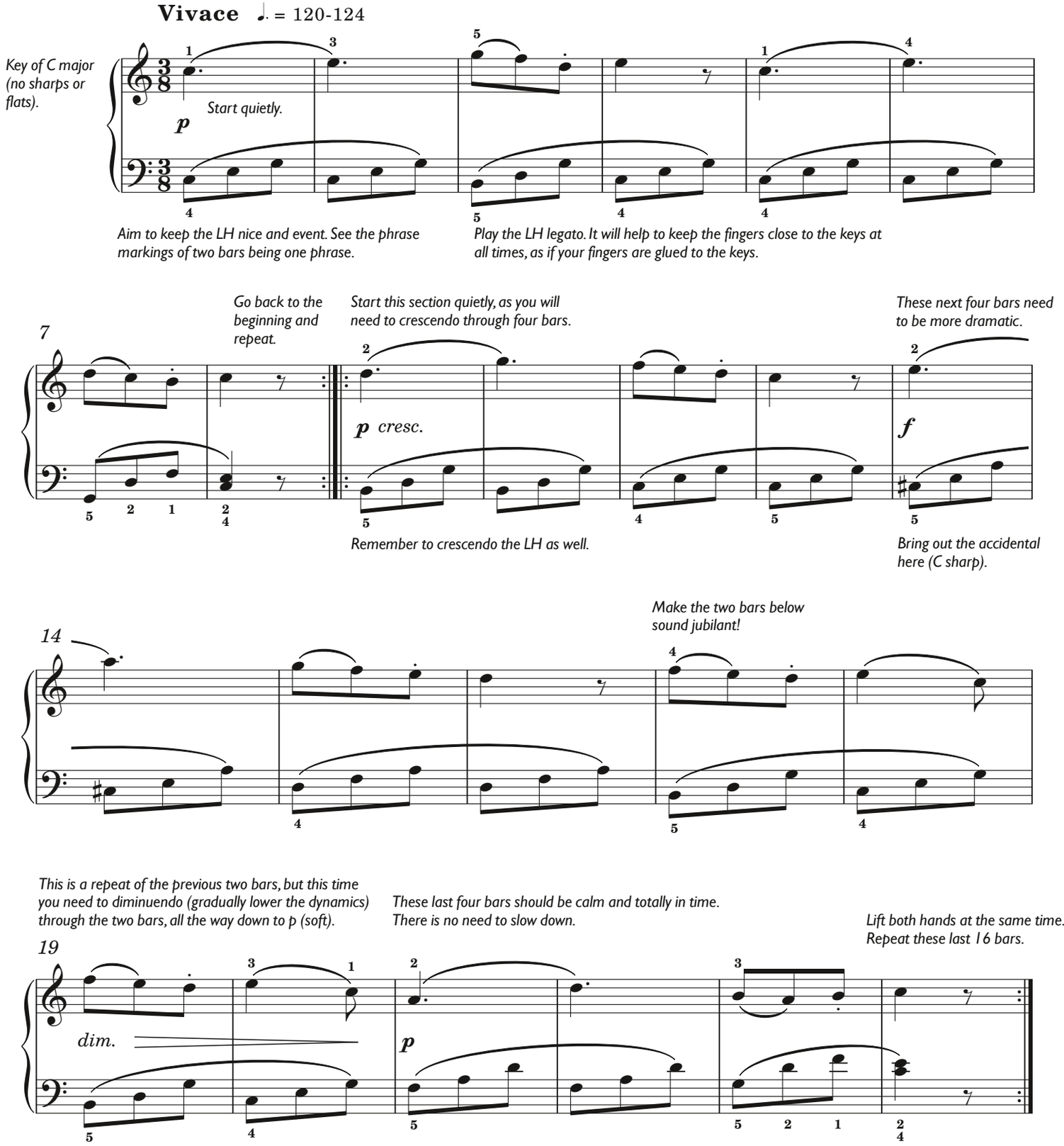
This piece comes from *The First Lessons on Pianoforte* op 125 by Austrian publisher, composer and teacher Anton Diabelli, who wrote many such educational volumes.

Playing tips: Even though this piece is marked at a fast speed, you should avoid the temptation to rush. It will help to listen to the CD. Think in four-bar phrases. There are two sections – the first one being bars 1-8, the second being bars 9 to the end. Each section is repeated. Try to make subtle differences when you play the repeats, such as altering the dynamics a little. No pedal required.

Take a look at the technical tips within the score.

Count the pulse silently to yourself for a couple of bars before you begin.

As suggested in the introductory text, it's helpful think of the RH melody in long four-bar phrases. Don't overlook the staccato notes – they have to be heard! Remember to raise your hand for the quaver rests.



TRACK 2

Samuel WESLEY (1766-1837)

Vivace from Sonatina op 12 no 8

BEGINNER

As a child prodigy Samuel Wesley was called 'the English Mozart'. He was an organist, teacher and a composer who wrote many liturgical and keyboard pieces.

Playing tips: This piece needs to sound lively and rhythmic. Try to maintain real finger independence. We advise practising hands separately and slowly to begin with. There is a lot to absorb and both hands are quite independent. If you listen to the CD, you will notice that some of the notes are detached (e.g. the two quavers in bar 2, the two quavers in bar 3). This is stylistically correct for the period. Pedal not needed.

Take a look at the technical tips within the score.

Vivace ♩ = 88

Key of B flat major (two flats in the key signature).

mf

The LH acts the piece's 'metronome' throughout. Keep in strict time!

Make sure we can hear the LH descending quavers here, as they are different than before.

Even though there are hardly any dynamics marked on the score, try to colour the music with the odd crescendo (at high points) and diminuendo (at the closing of phrases).

New section begins here, as the LH answers the RH. We need to be able to hear this. It is delightfully playful.

7

Bar 16 ends the middle section. Round it off nicely before continuing onwards to bar 17, in which the opening theme returns.

13

There are no dynamic markings here, but we suggest that you crescendo towards the end for a nice resolute 'forte' ending.

19

TRACK 3

John KEMBER

Le Carbet (Beguine)

BEGINNER/ INTERMEDIATE

Notes from the composer: The Latin American dance 'Beguine' comes from the Caribbean island of Martinique, and Le Carbet is the point on the island where Christopher Columbus made landfall in 1502. As is true of all Latin American music, individual styles are recognised by their distinctive rhythms. In the case of the beguine, that rhythm is a simple and repetitive one-bar pattern. Again, as with all Latin dances, two hands are necessary to play this rhythm, which means that the melodic line needs to be simple but prominent.

Composer's playing tips: The LH figure must always be clearly *on* the beat to give a foundation for the syncopation in the RH. It helps to play just this accompaniment on its own to establish the pattern and the harmonies correctly. Once the acccompaniment is established, the melody will require careful legato fingering to sustain the full length of each phrase. The melody can nonetheless be played expressively and given sufficient weight to be clear and supported by the rhythms below. Try to avoid the rhythm dominating your performance but aim to achieve a good balance and tone throughout. Maintain an even tempo and equally even crotchet triplets – another common feature found in much Latin American music.

Pedal tips: Careful use of the sustain pedal will produce that legato and relaxed feel that you need to effectively bring across the beguine.

Beguine ♩ = c. 118

mf *f*

Gm D7(♭9) Gm G7

5

Cm G7 Cm C7 Fm

10

mp

G7 Cm A♭maj7 G7 Cm9 Cm G7(♭9)

15

mf

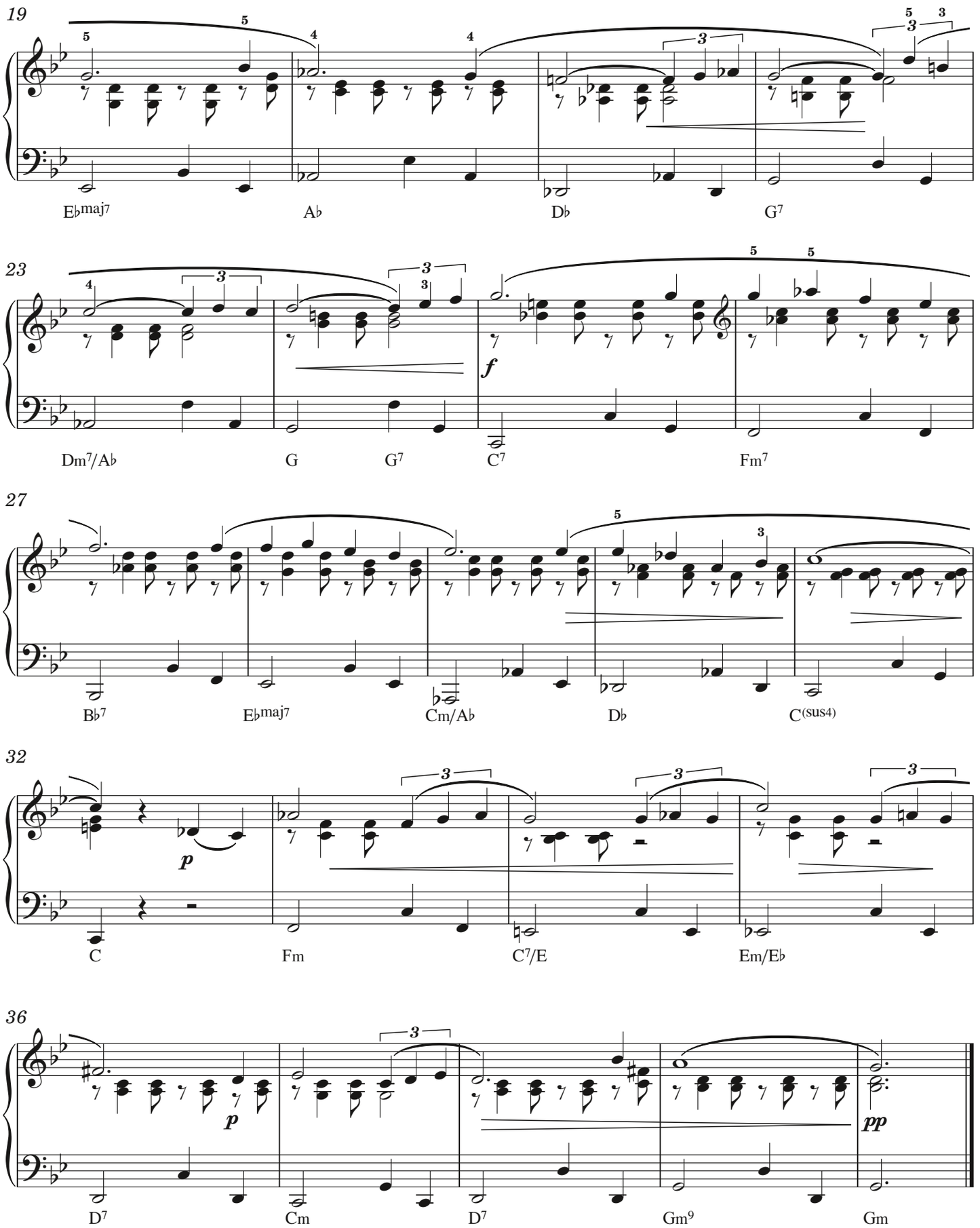
Cm Fm7 B♭7

TRACK 3

John KEMBER

Le Carbet (Beguine)

BEGINNER/ INTERMEDIATE



TRACK 4

DON'T MISS MELANIE SPANSWICK'S LESSON ON THIS PIECE PAGE 20

Carl Philipp Emanuel BACH (1714-1788)

La Caroline Wq. 117/39 H.98

BEGINNER/ INTERMEDIATE

This charming character piece, dating from about 1755, may have been named for CPE Bach's daughter, Anna Carolina Philippina. He wrote a second piece that may confirm the veracity of this story: *La Philippine* Wq. 117/34 H. 96!

Playing tips: Right at the beginning, in the first four bars, you need to make a dramatic crescendo. Use the LH to help, and voice the RH two-note chords, and feel the move towards the top A in bar 4. The RH should sound expressive throughout. Where you see accent markings, bring out the notes more. The LH is the accompaniment, with lots of repeated notes, and one can imagine the fortepiano sound. Shape these repeated notes, keeping them even, making sure that none of them stick out. The LH should be given a lot of care. We suggest hands-separate practice.

Round off phrases nicely with a diminuendo, such as the phrase in bars 19-21. From bar 22 there is a slightly brighter section. Notice the pause at bar 54 – this should come as a surprise! End resolutely.

Pedal tips: The fingers should do the work as opposed to using too much pedal. You will see that there is a sprinkling of pedal marked on the score.

Read Melanie Spanswick's step-by-step lesson on this piece on page 20.

Cantabile con moto ♩ = 60

p *cresc.* *f*

6

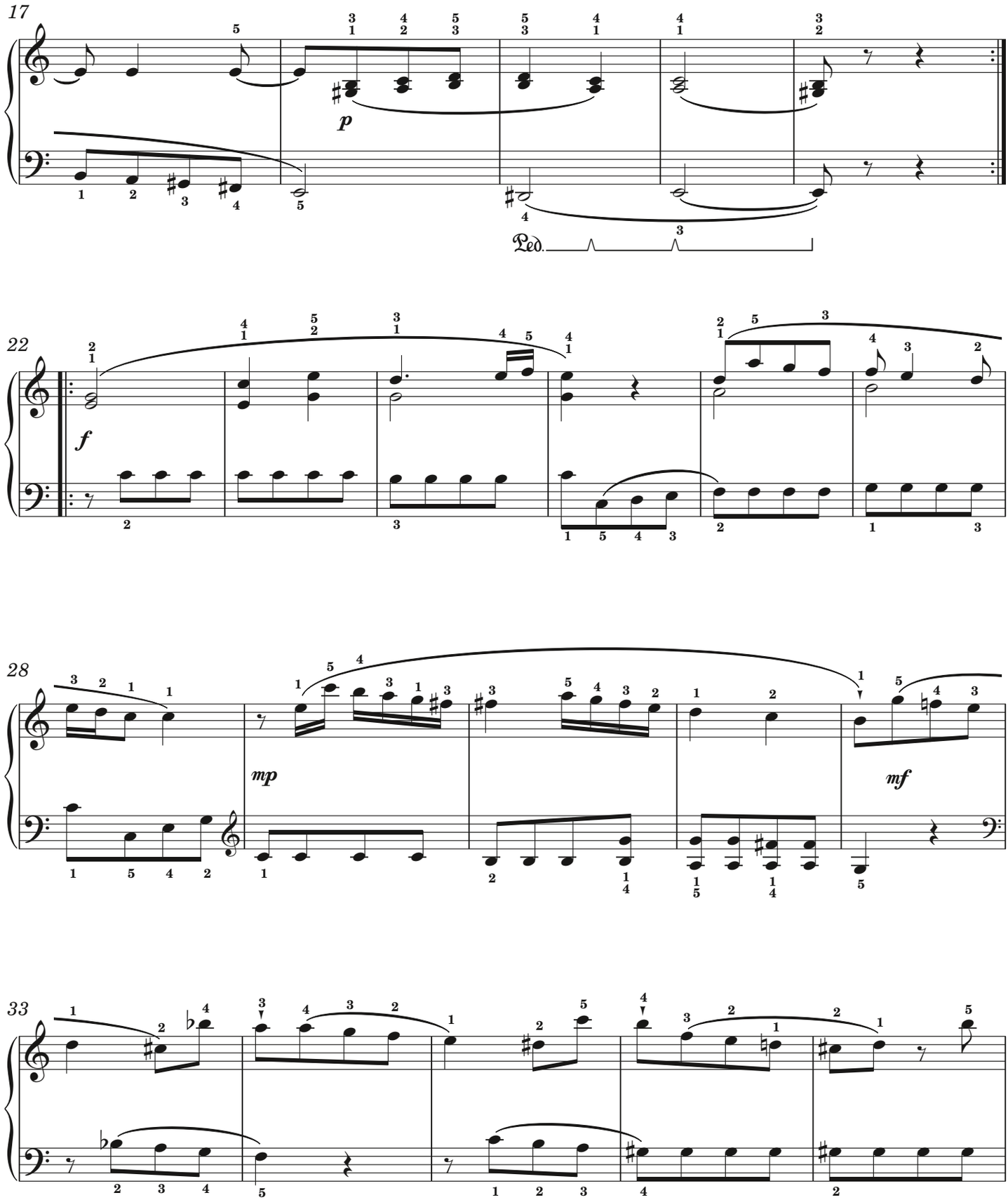
12 *p* *f*

TRACK 4

Carl Philipp Emanuel BACH (1714-1788)

La Caroline Wq. 117/39 H.98

BEGINNER/ INTERMEDIATE

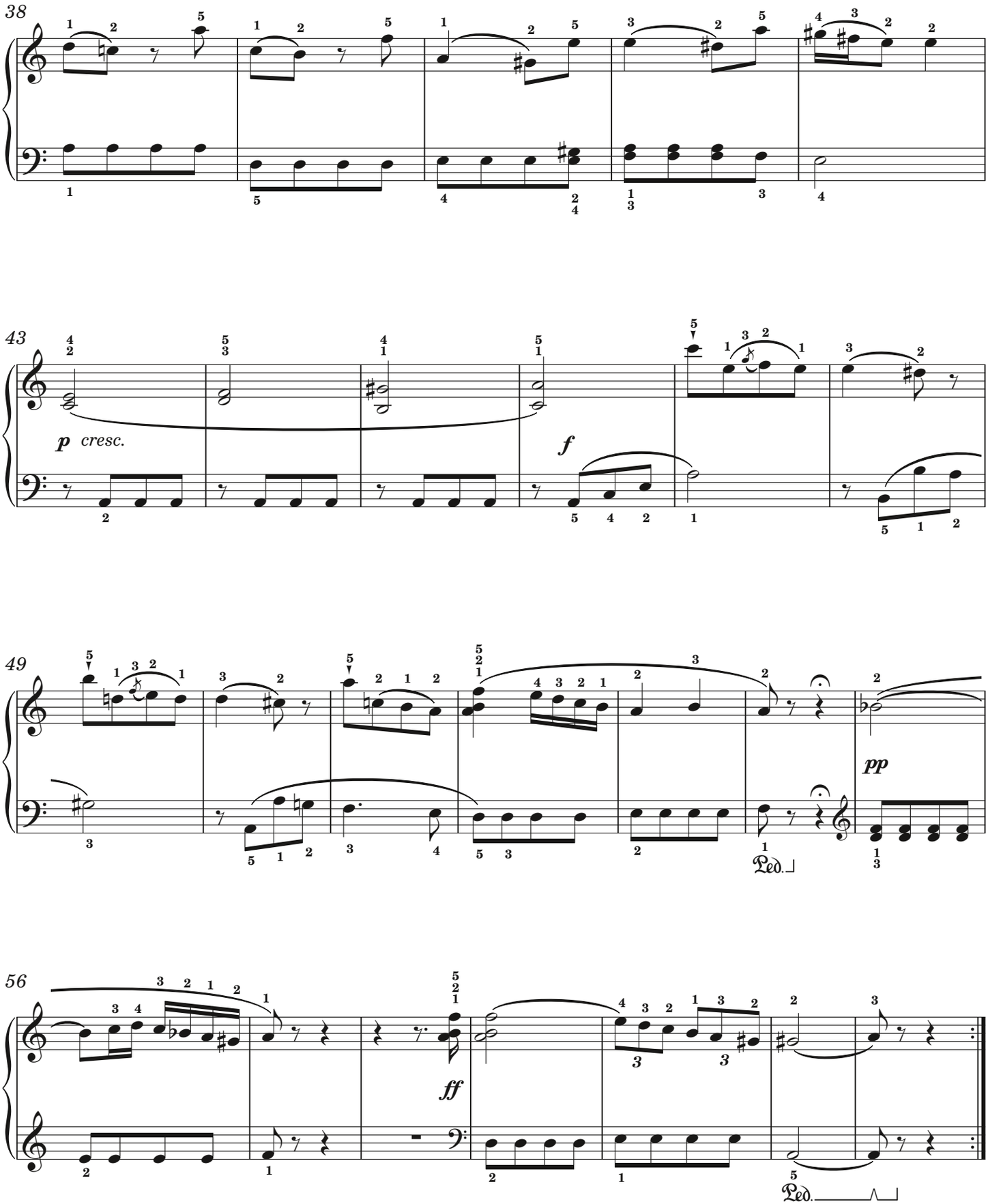


TRACK 4

Carl Philipp Emanuel BACH (1714-1788)

La Caroline Wq. 117/39 H.98

BEGINNER/ INTERMEDIATE



TRACK 5

Erik SATIE (1866-1925)

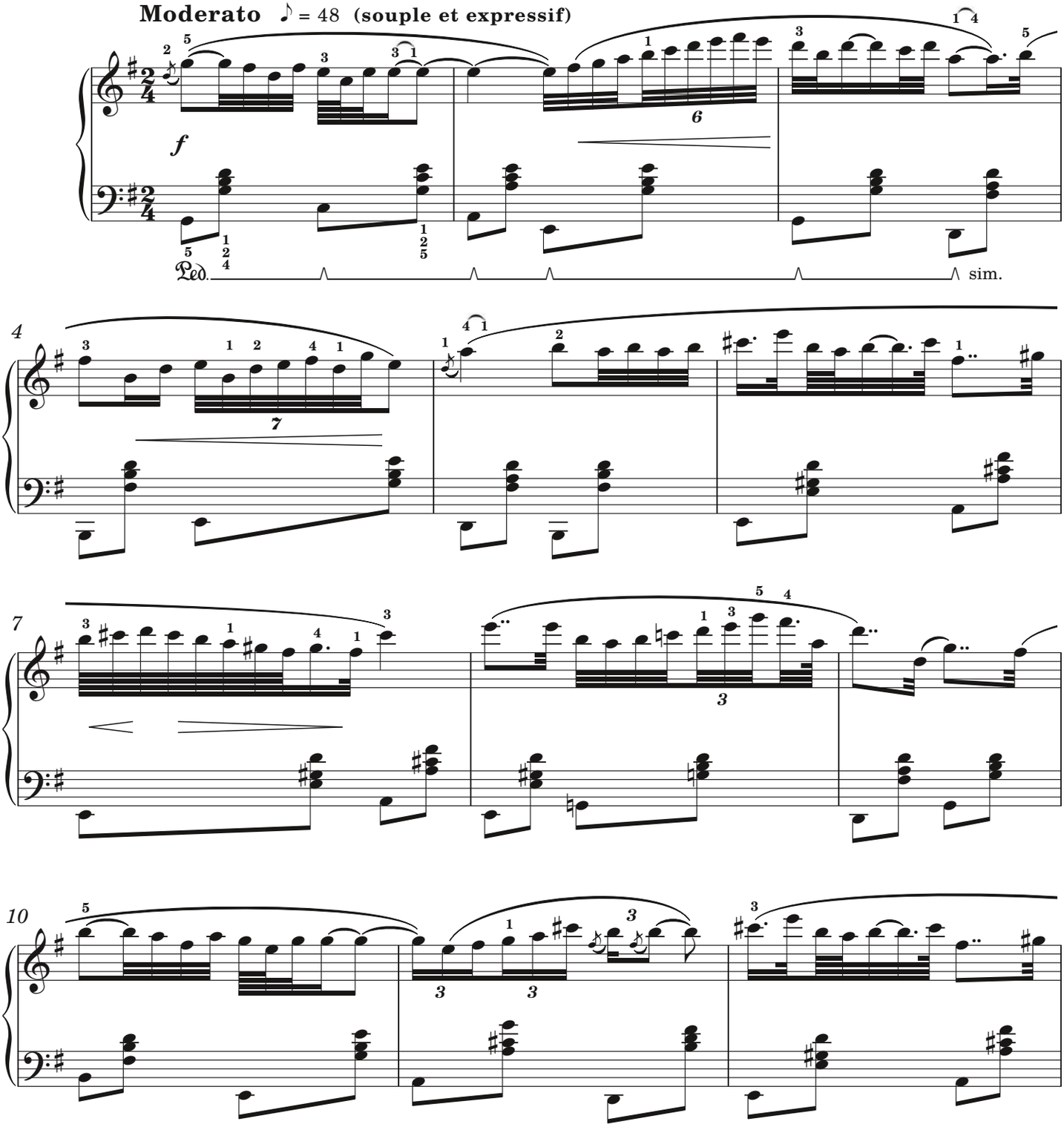
Gnossienne No 5

INTERMEDIATE

'Gnossienne' is a musical form created by the brilliant and eccentric French composer Erik Satie, who wrote six of them for solo piano. This fifth *Gnossienne* was composed around 1889, but not published until 1968, along with Nos 4 and 6.

Playing tips: The pulse is crucial in this piece, and it is controlled by the LH. Make sure you learn the LH notes well and that you keep the quavers steady – like a heartbeat. Within the pulse, the RH can be a little bit more flexible (with subtle rubatos here and there). We suggested learning hands separately, always bearing in mind the pulse. The RH obviously needs more work, but the notes sit well under the hands, and we have added some fingerings to guide you. There are many scale passages – it will make sense where you need to pass the hand over the thumb.

Pedal tips: Ample pedal is required, to create the desired 'wash of colour' sound. Change on every beat (hence, two changes per bar).



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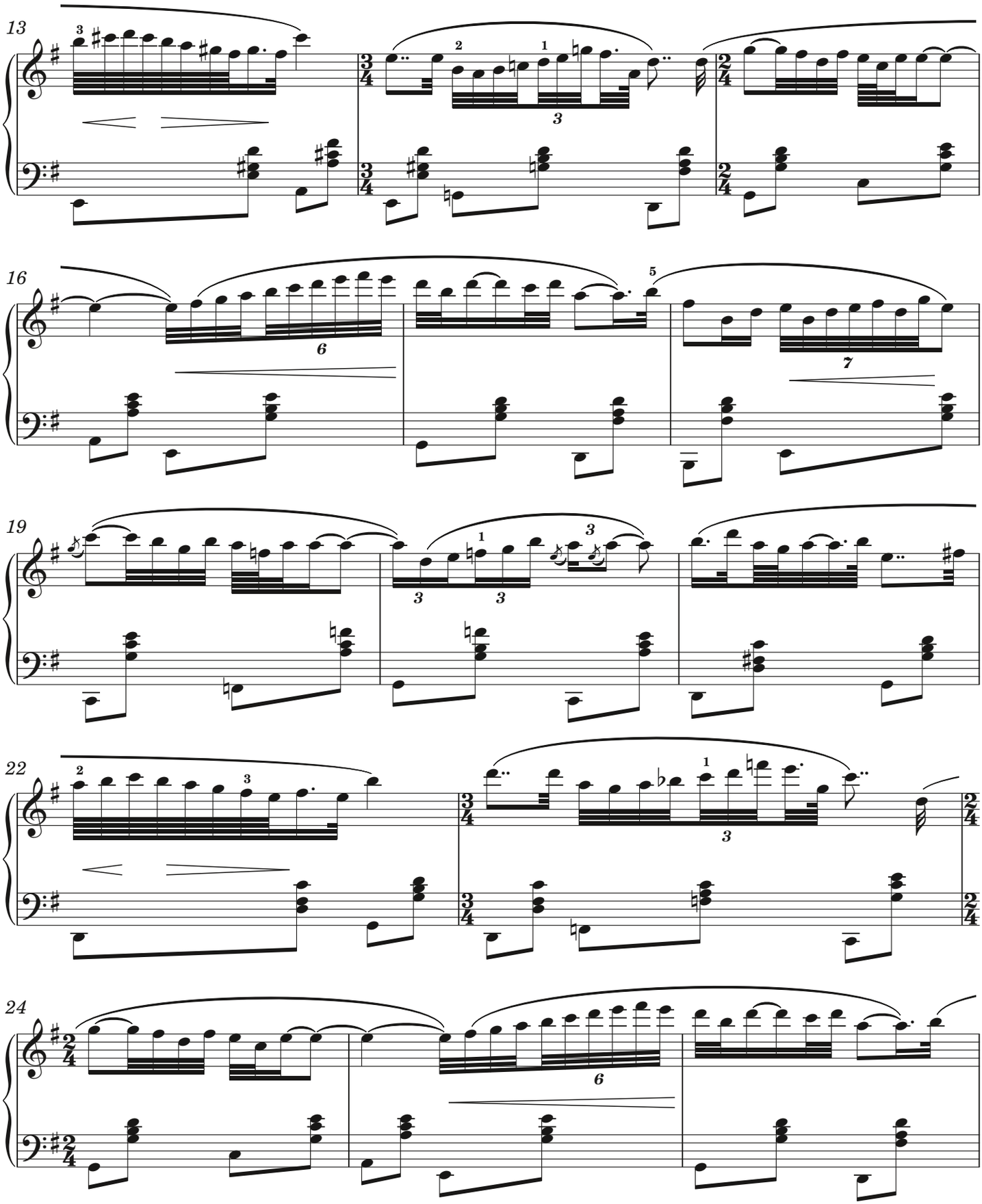
Gnossienne No 5

INTERMEDIATE



TRACK 5

Erik SATIE (1866-1925)

Gnossienne No 5

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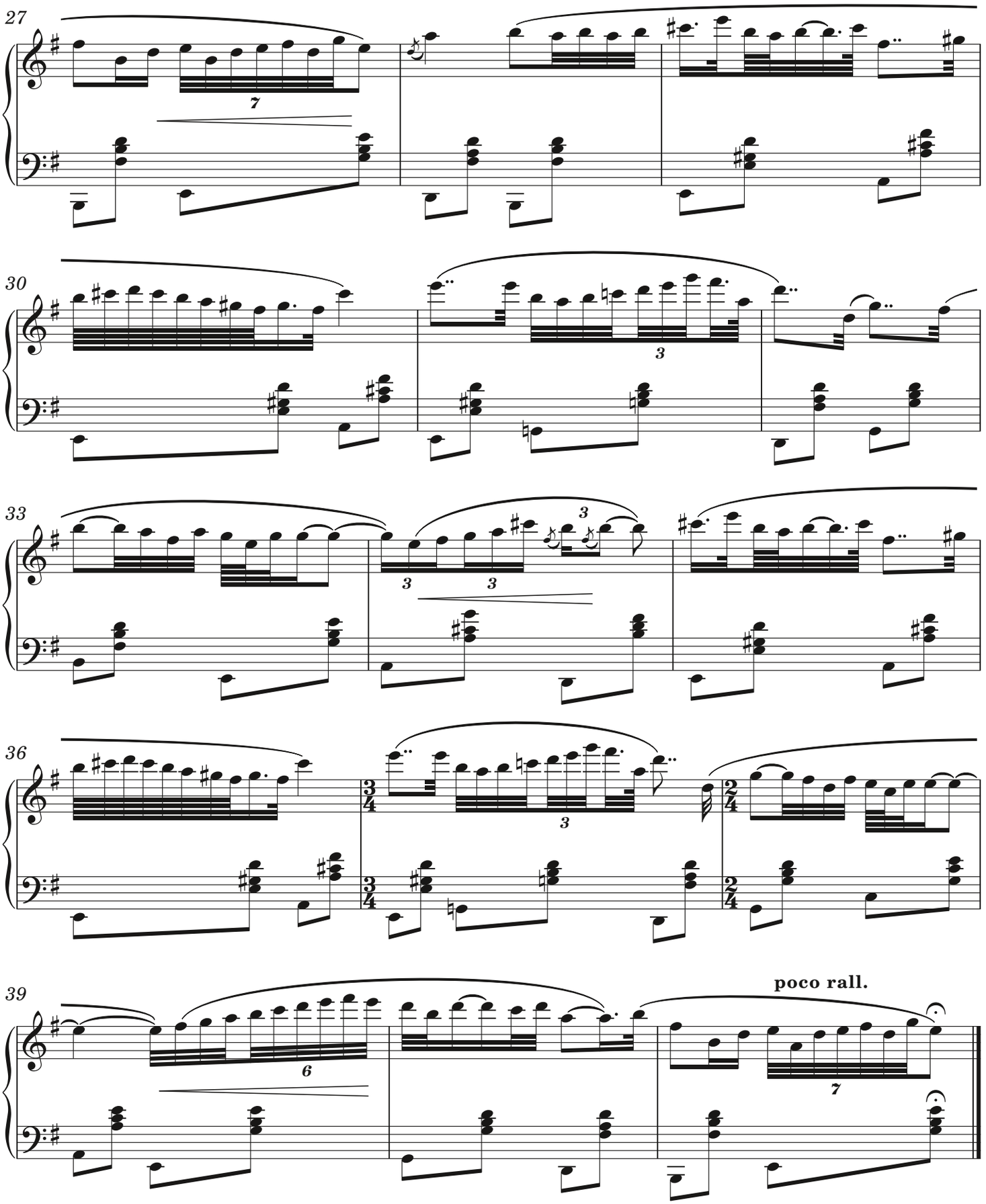


TRACK 6

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750) arr. SCAIFE

Arioso BWV 1056

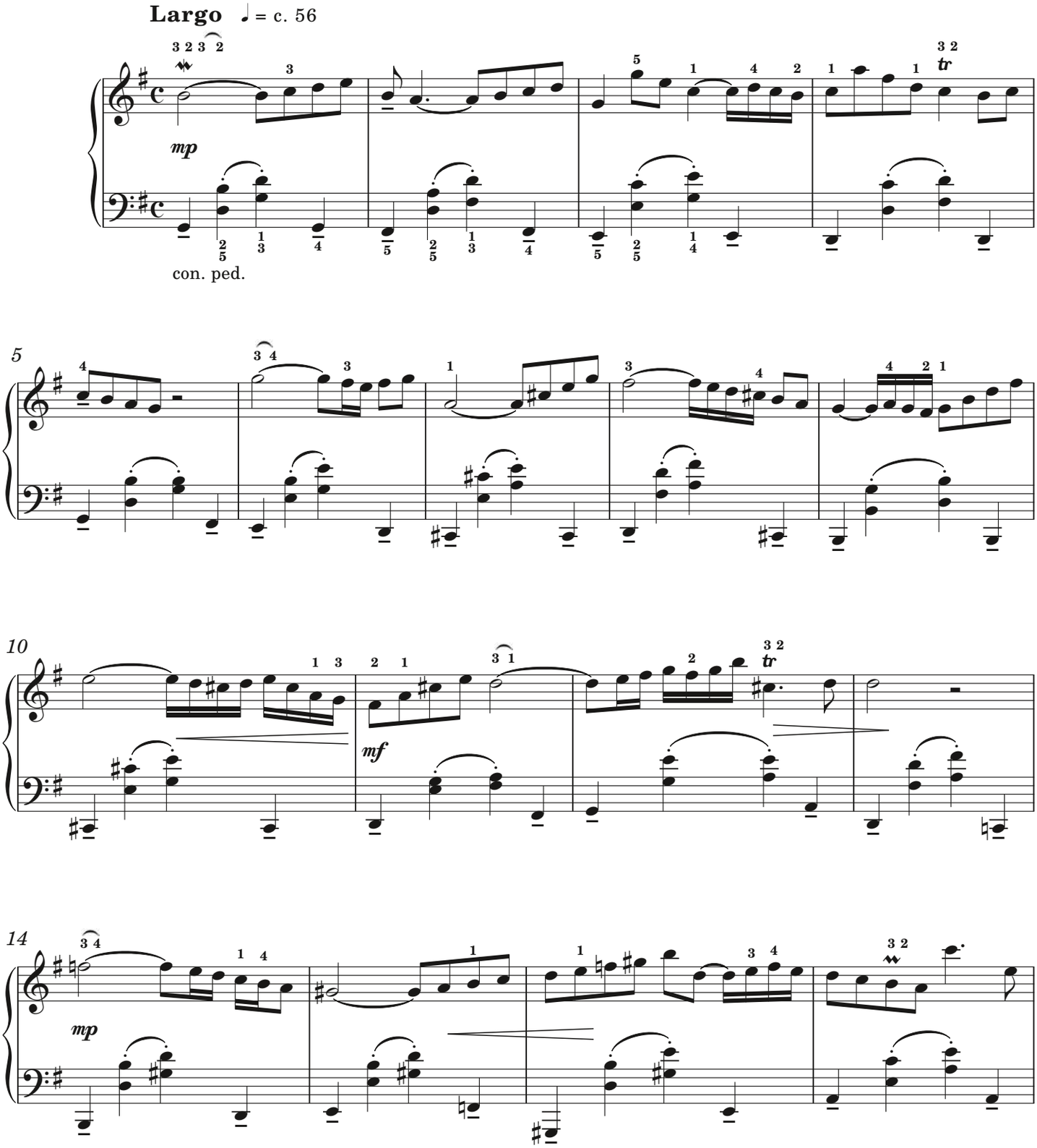
INTERMEDIATE

Bach's Harpsichord Concerto No 5 in F minor, for which this Arioso is the second movement, may have originally been an oboe concerto; it has also been arranged for violin. The term 'arioso' arose in the Baroque era and referred to short vocal pieces.

Playing tips: Keep the LH even and shape the RH melody. You will notice some finger substitution here and there that will help create a 'real' legato. On the CD, our pianist, Chenyin Li, takes a very Baroque approach, with little rubato (see Recording note, right). If you prefer a more expressive account, add more rubato as required.

Pedal tips: The arranger suggests pedalling late on the first beat, after the mordent, and then holding down for much of the rest of the bar, playing LH beats 2 and 3 – the upper strings – very light and short (staccato dots under the slur). This differentiates the bass line from the inner texture, which is one of the challenges of playing this piece.

Recording note: Chenyin Li had already recorded the Arioso for our covermount CD before the arranger made some small alterations. The score here is perfect, but you will notice that the recording differs slightly from it. In the next issue, we will present another recording of this wonderful piece in which Chenyin will perform in a more Romantic style to show something of the variety of possible approaches to playing Bach.

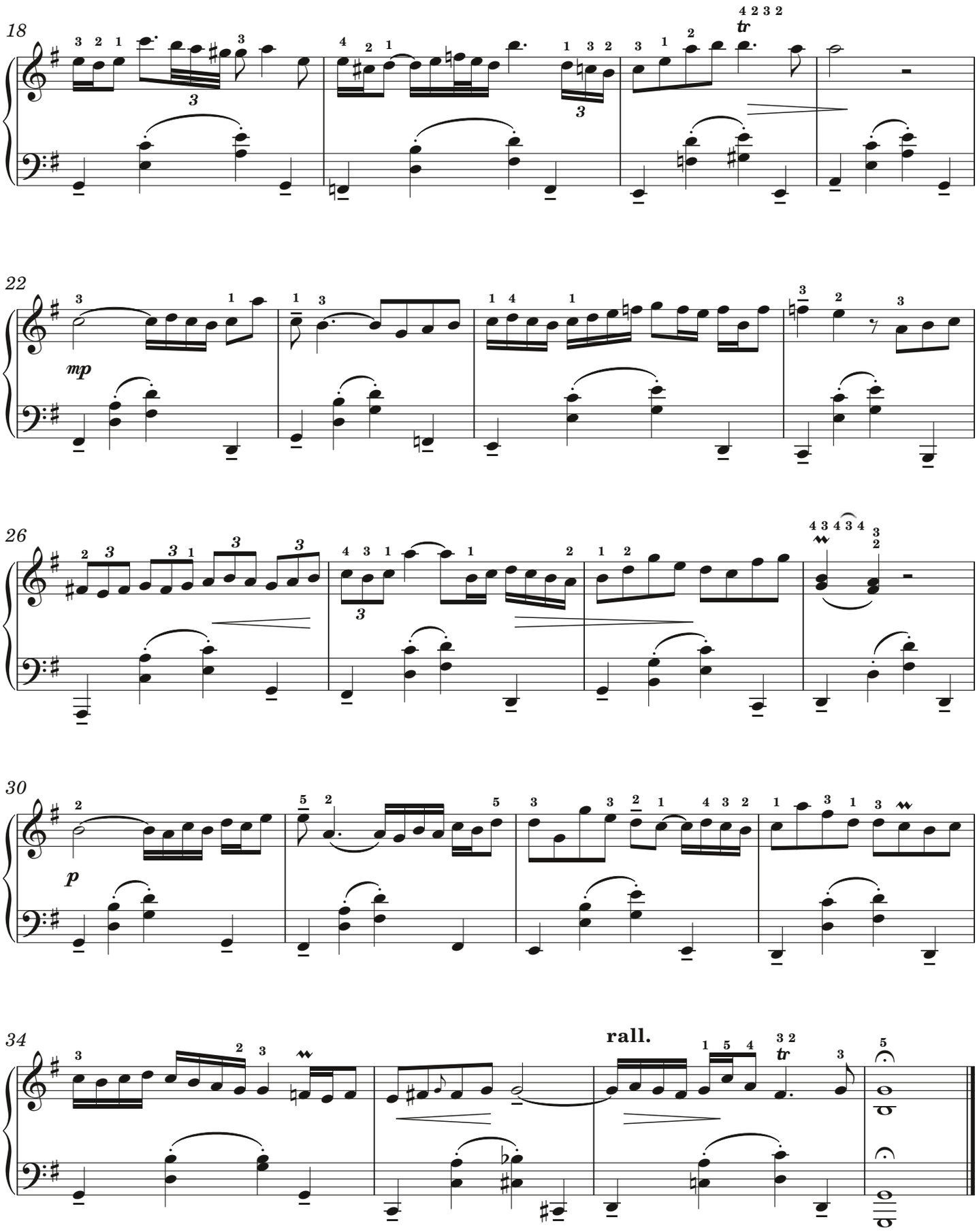


TRACK 6

Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750) arr. SCAIFE

Arioso BWV 1056

INTERMEDIATE



TRACK 7

Zdeněk FIBICH (1850-1900)

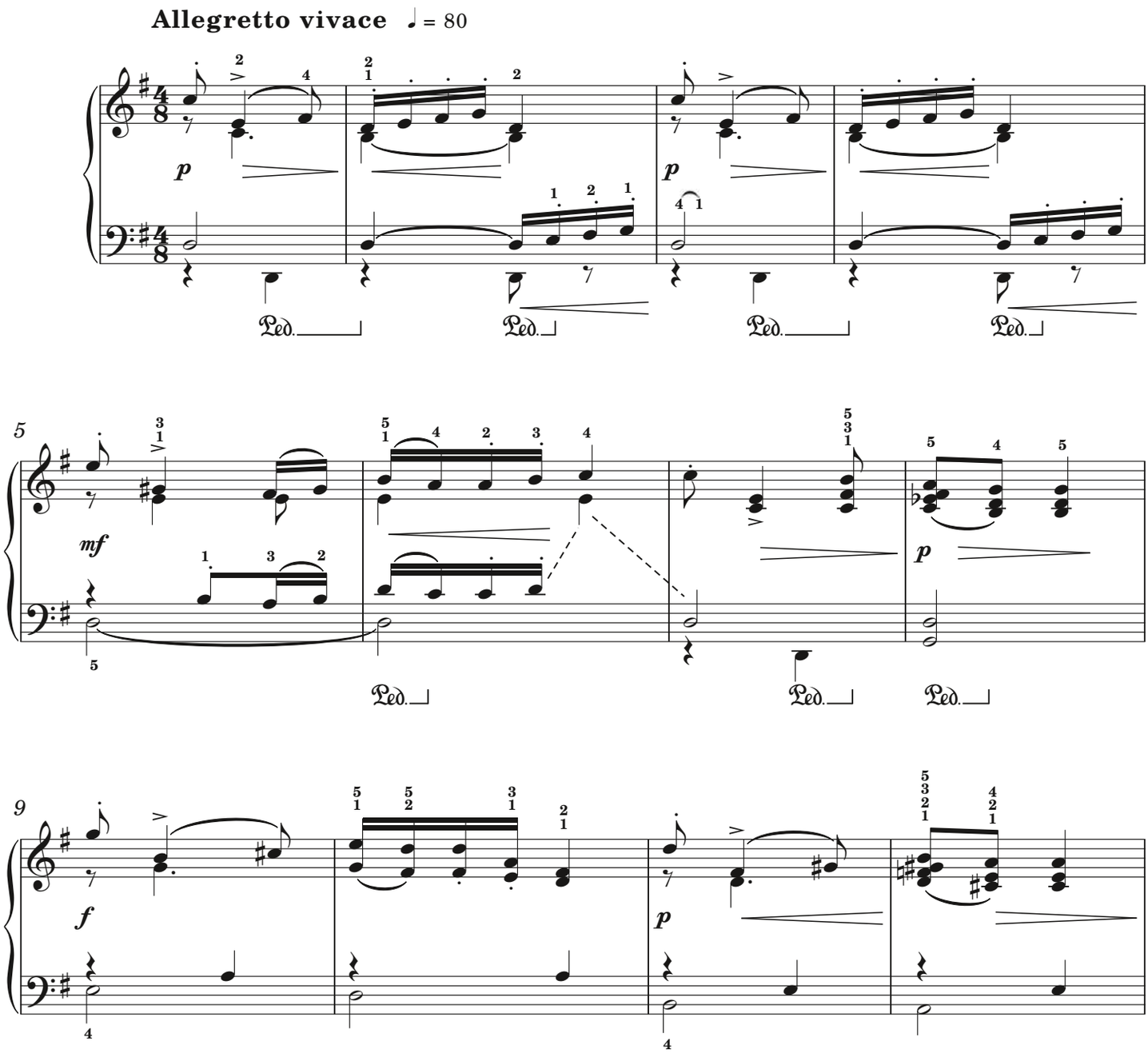
No 9 from *Moods* op 41

INTERMEDIATE

The Czech composer Zdeněk Fibich is best known for his operas and his nationalist works. A fine pianist who studied with Moscheles, Fibich wrote many works for piano including several volumes of solo piano pieces collectively known as *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences*. This massive project was inspired by a great passion: in 1895, Fibich left his second wife for Anežka Schulzová, a former piano pupil who later served as the librettist for his last three operas. The 376 pieces that comprise *Moods, Impressions, and Reminiscences* are a musical diary and record of the couple's life together.

Playing tips: There's a Slavic mood to this delightful short work, so fall onto the second accented beat in the RH. That will give it a syncopated, 'rustic' feel. Notice how the LH often mimics the RH (e.g. bar 2 etc.) – try to bring out the semiquaver LH notes, making sure to follow the crescendo line through the four notes. When playing the sixths in the RH, keep the wrists loose. Spot the ritardando at bar 18 – make the most of it before returning to the 'a tempo' at bar 19. You will notice there are places throughout where the LH plays a minim that lasts the duration of the bar. Aim to create enough sound in that minim to last the length of the bar. One should be able to hear it resonate.

Pedal tips: Some pedalling is marked into the score, at the beginning, as a guide. Pedal has to be subtle and light, in order not to drown out the light, dance-like feeling.



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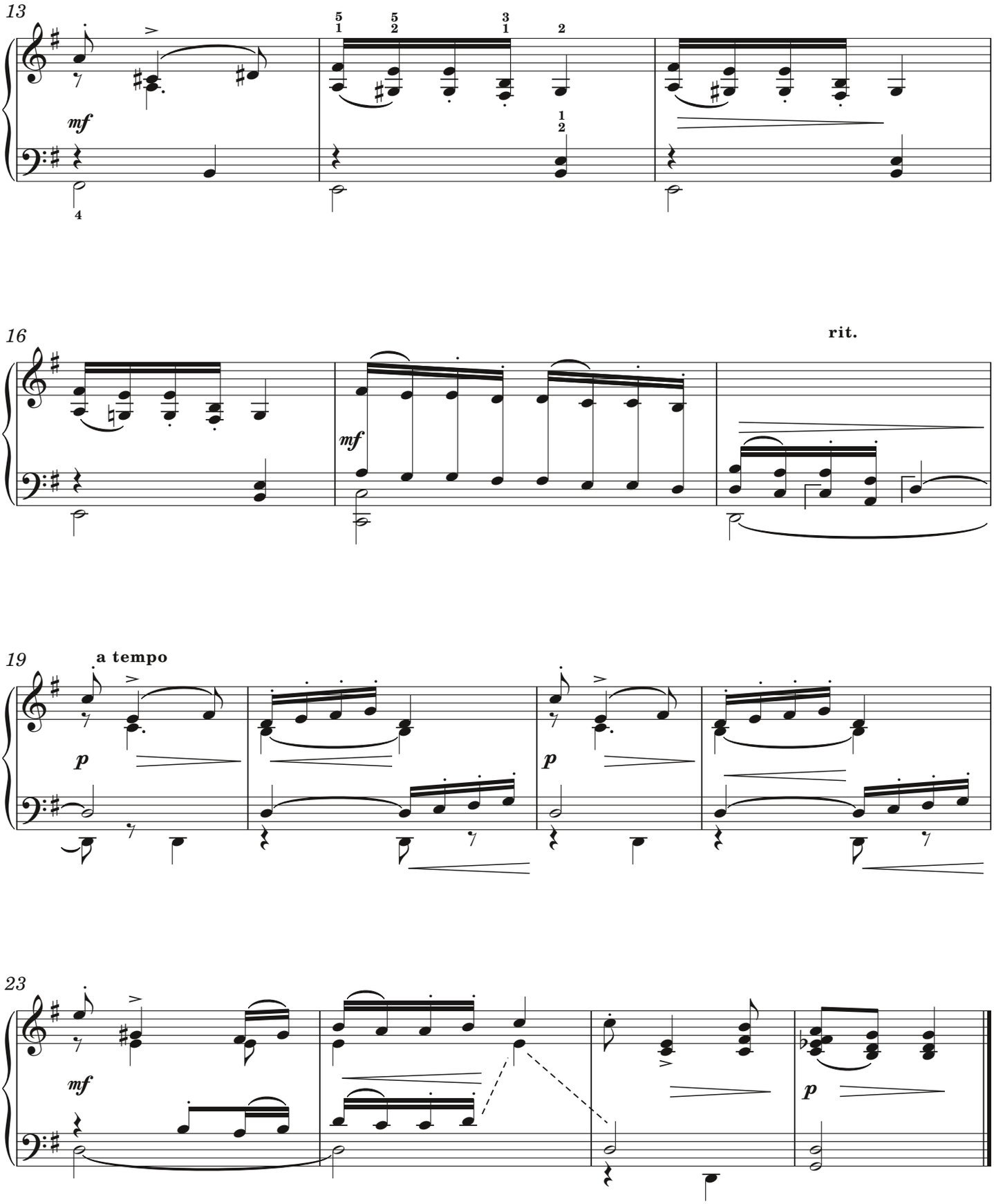
Zdeněk FIBICH (1850-1900)

No 9 from *Moods* op 41

INTERMEDIATE



TRACK 8

DON'T MISS JANET NEWMAN'S LESSON ON THIS PIECE PAGE 22

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Sonata for the Young op 118 no 1, first movement

INTERMEDIATE

Schumann dedicated the *Three Piano Sonatas for the Young* op 118 (1853) to his three youngest daughters, and each sonata is a character study of one of them. This first sonata is dedicated to the youngest daughter, Julie, who was then eight years old.

Playing tips: The RH melody is sweet and caressing, so make it legato and try to create a deep singing tone. This movement is in A-B-A form, with section A ending at bar 14. Bar 15 onwards (B section) is more heroic and clipped, requiring less legato. It's also *forte* throughout apart from a lovely subito *piano* at end of bar 26. The melody (A) returns at bar 35, with a tiny coda to end.

Pedal tips: There are no pedalling markings on the score. As Janet Newman writes in her How to Play on page 22, you should see pedalling as a device that helps to add texture and depth of sound as well as aiding legato – but don't see it as a substitute.

Read Janet Newman's step-by-step lesson on this piece on page 22.

Allegro ♩ = 92

Lebhaft

p

5

cresc.

9

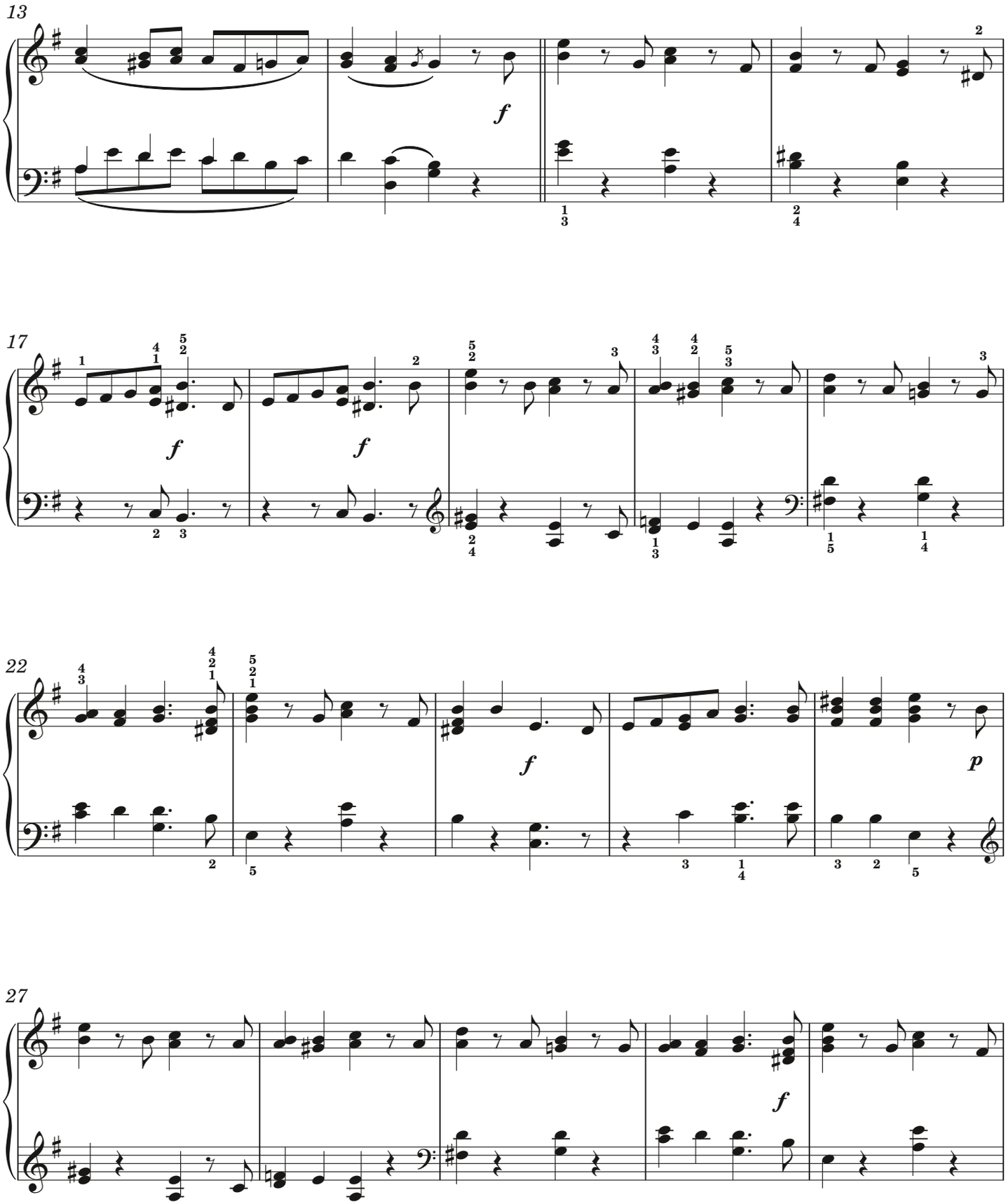
fp

TRACK 8

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Sonata for the Young op 118 no 1, first movement

INTERMEDIATE

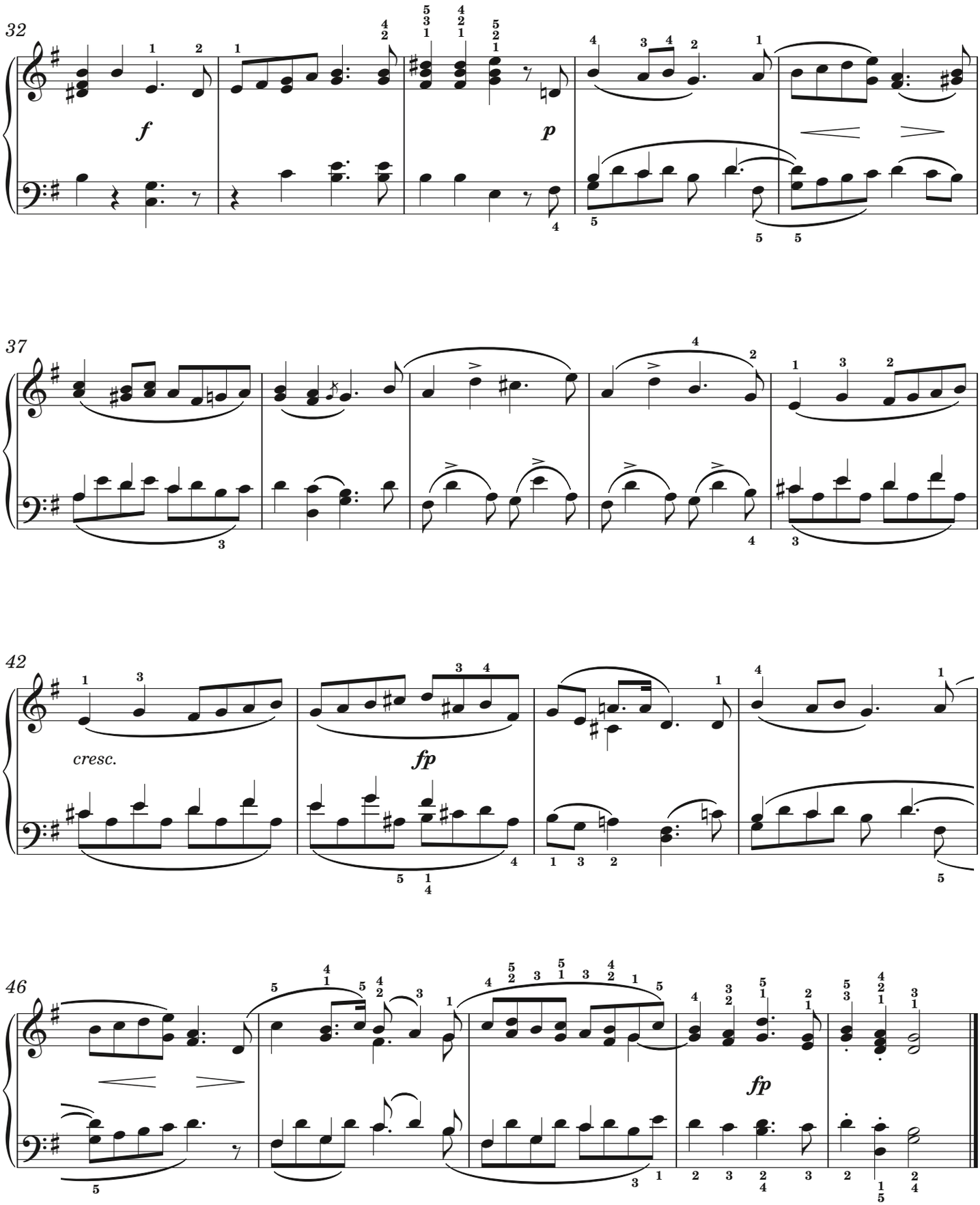


TRACK 8

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Sonata for the Young op 118 no 1, first movement

INTERMEDIATE



HANS-GÜNTER HEUMANN
BEGINNERS KEYBOARD CLASS

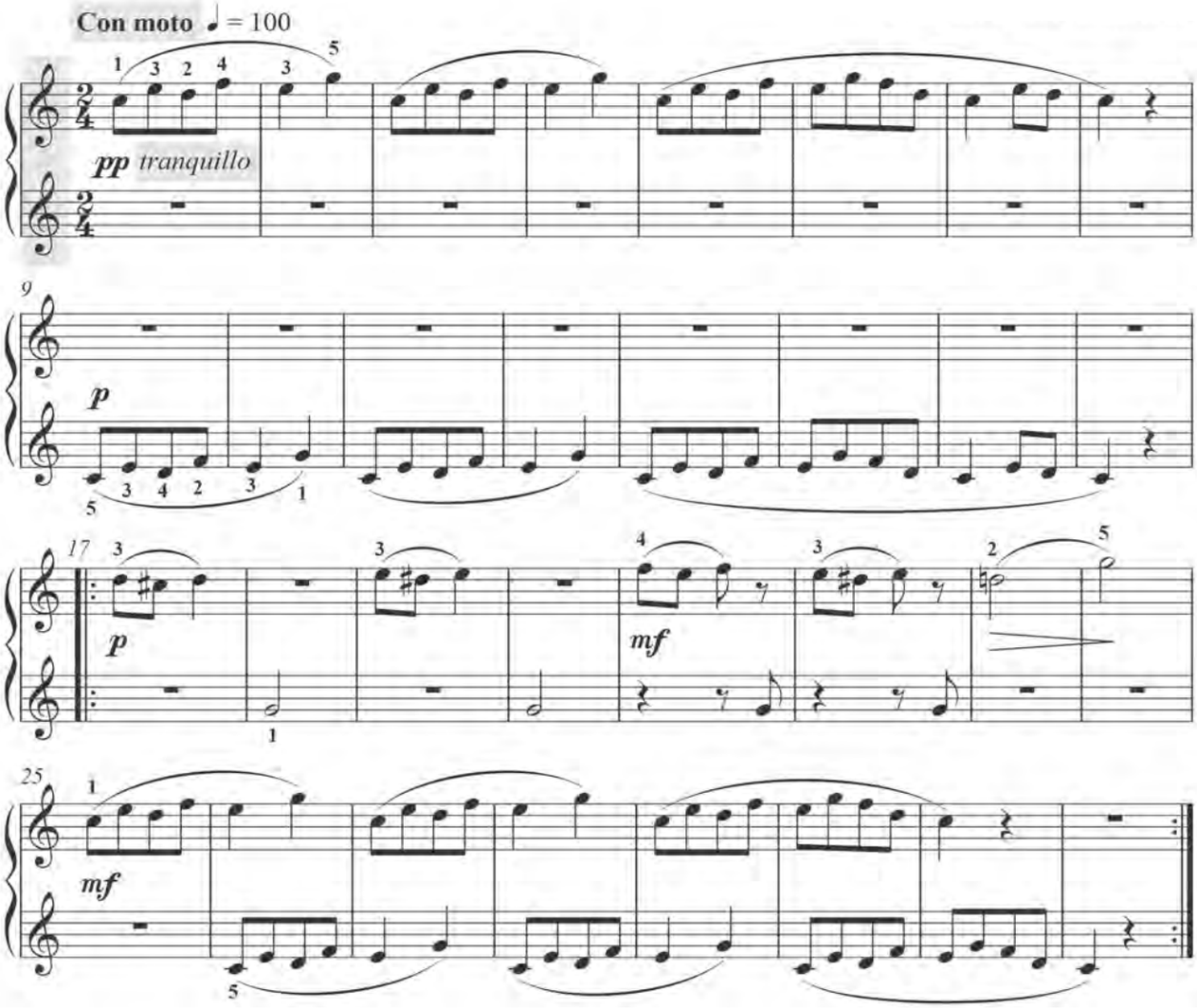
LESSON 14: TREBLE CLEF IN BOTH HANDS

On these four pages, *Pianist* covers the most basic stages of learning the piano through a series of lessons by Hans-Günter Heumann. Lesson 14 offers up short pieces and exercises where both hands play in the treble clef. Before starting to play, move your piano stool slightly to the right, so that your hands and body are well centred.

At Play op 197 no 8

Cornelius Gurlitt (1820-1901)

Con moto = with movement, quickly
Tranquillo = tranquil



Cornelius Gurlitt
(1820-1901)

Country: Germany

Period: Romantic

Cornelius Gurlitt was an extremely prolific and versatile composer. In addition to orchestral and chamber music, he composed an opera, two operettas, choral works and many songs.

However, he is best known today for his piano works, particularly his easy pieces for beginner pianists, for example, *The Young Pianist's First Steps* op 82, *Little Melodic Exercises for Beginners* op 187, *Fireside Fancies* op 197 and *The First Performance* op 210.

Exercise op 190 no 31

Louis Köhler (1820-1886)

♩ = 144

mf

p

mf

mp

p

Christian Louis Heinrich Köhler (1820-1886)

Country: Germany

Period: Romantic

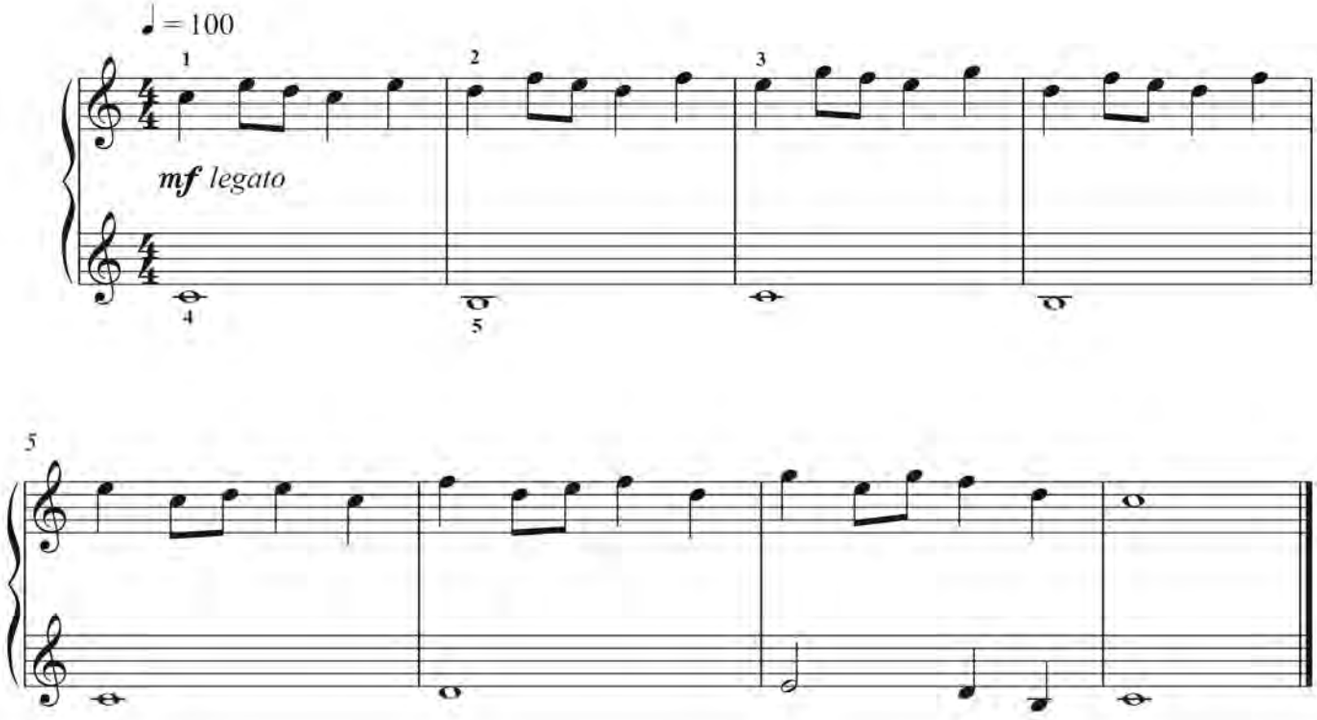
Works: over 300

Christian Louis Heinrich Köhler (known as Louis Köhler in English-speaking countries) was a pianist, composer, writer and, above all, a very important piano pedagogue in the 19th century. Among other works, he wrote operas, music for a play, a ballet, numerous piano pieces, studies and pedagogical works.

His many pedagogical piano works, such as *12 Easy Studies* op 157, *The Easiest Pieces* op 190 and *Practical Method for the Piano* op 300 are still in use today.

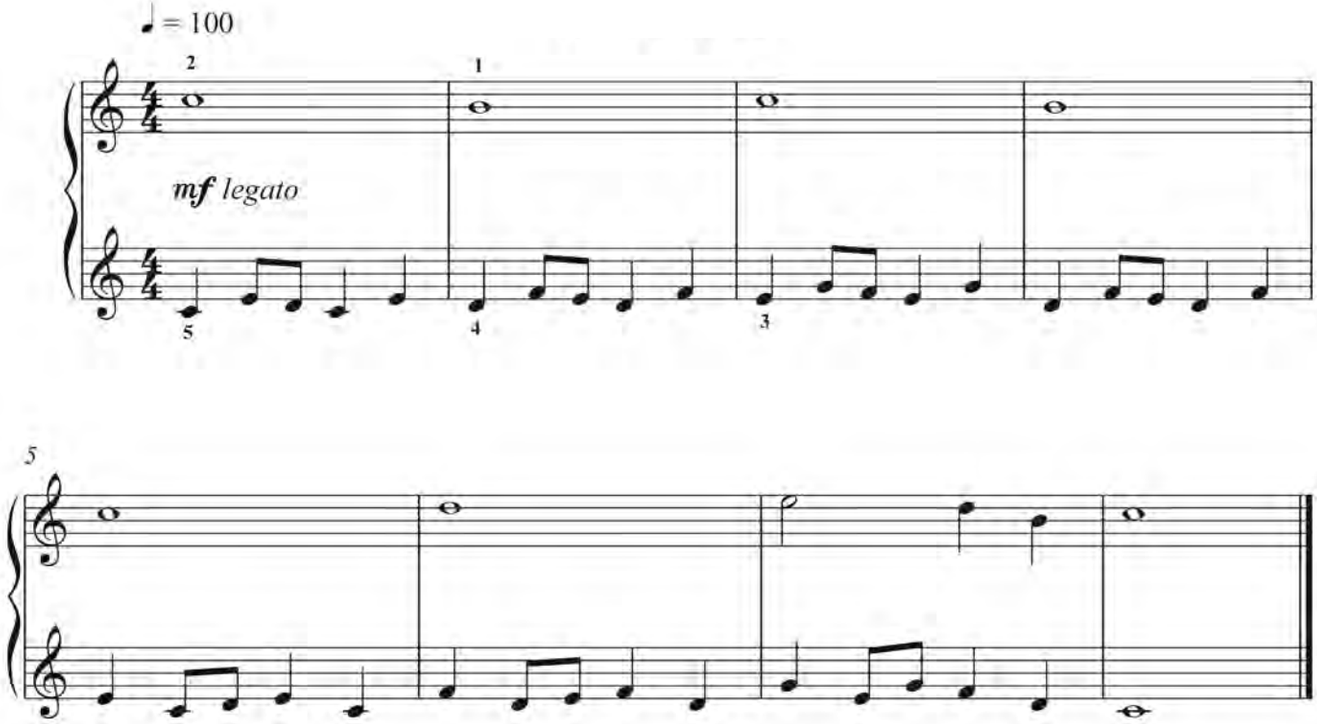
Exercise op 190 no 13

Louis Köhler (1820-1886)



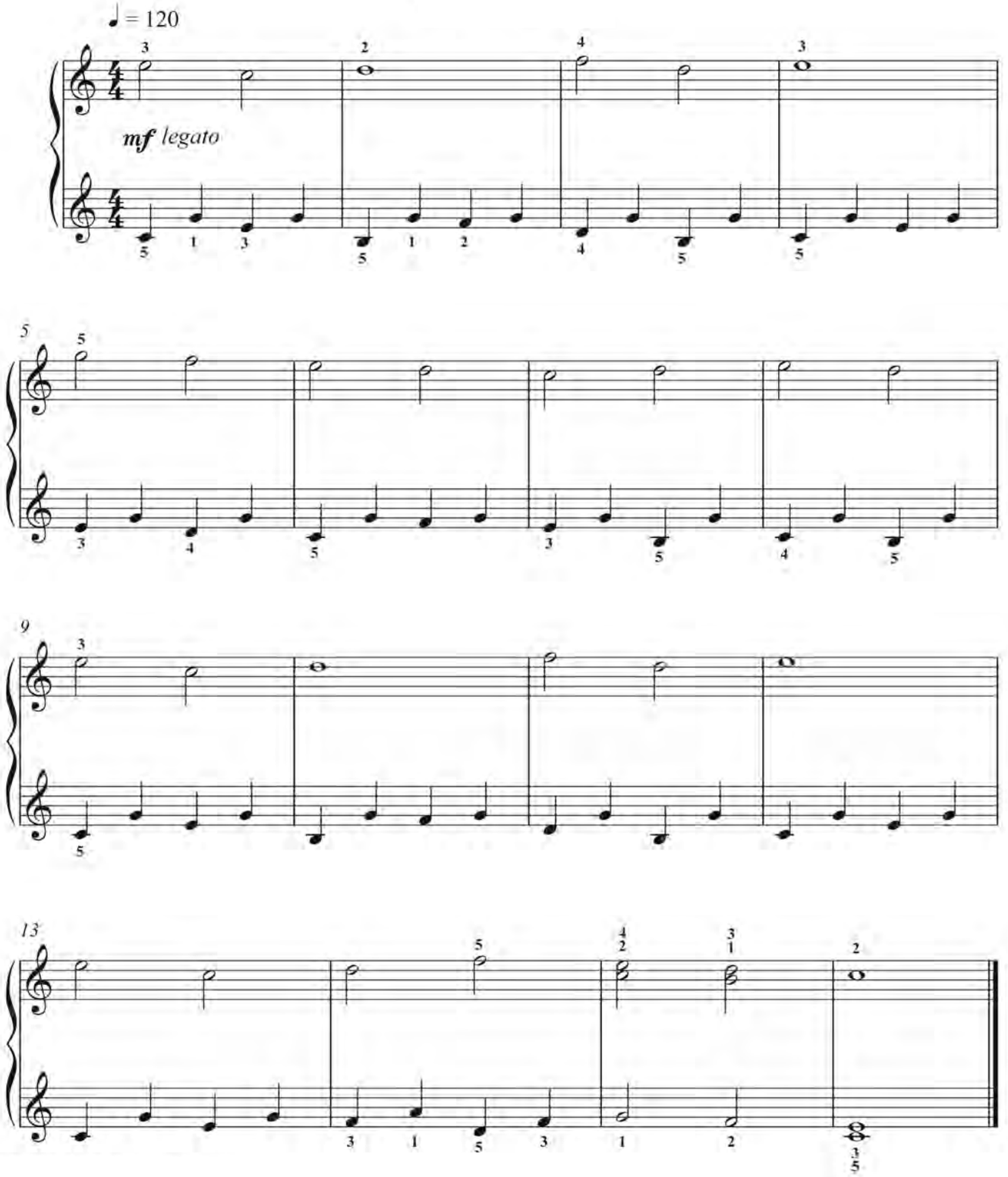
Exercise op 190 no 14

Louis Köhler (1820-1886)



Exercise op 190 no 16

Louis Köhler (1820-1886)



Hans-Günter Heumann continues his beginner series in the next issue.
To find out more about Heumann, go to www.schott-music.com

TRACK 9

Alexander SCRIABIN (1872-1915)

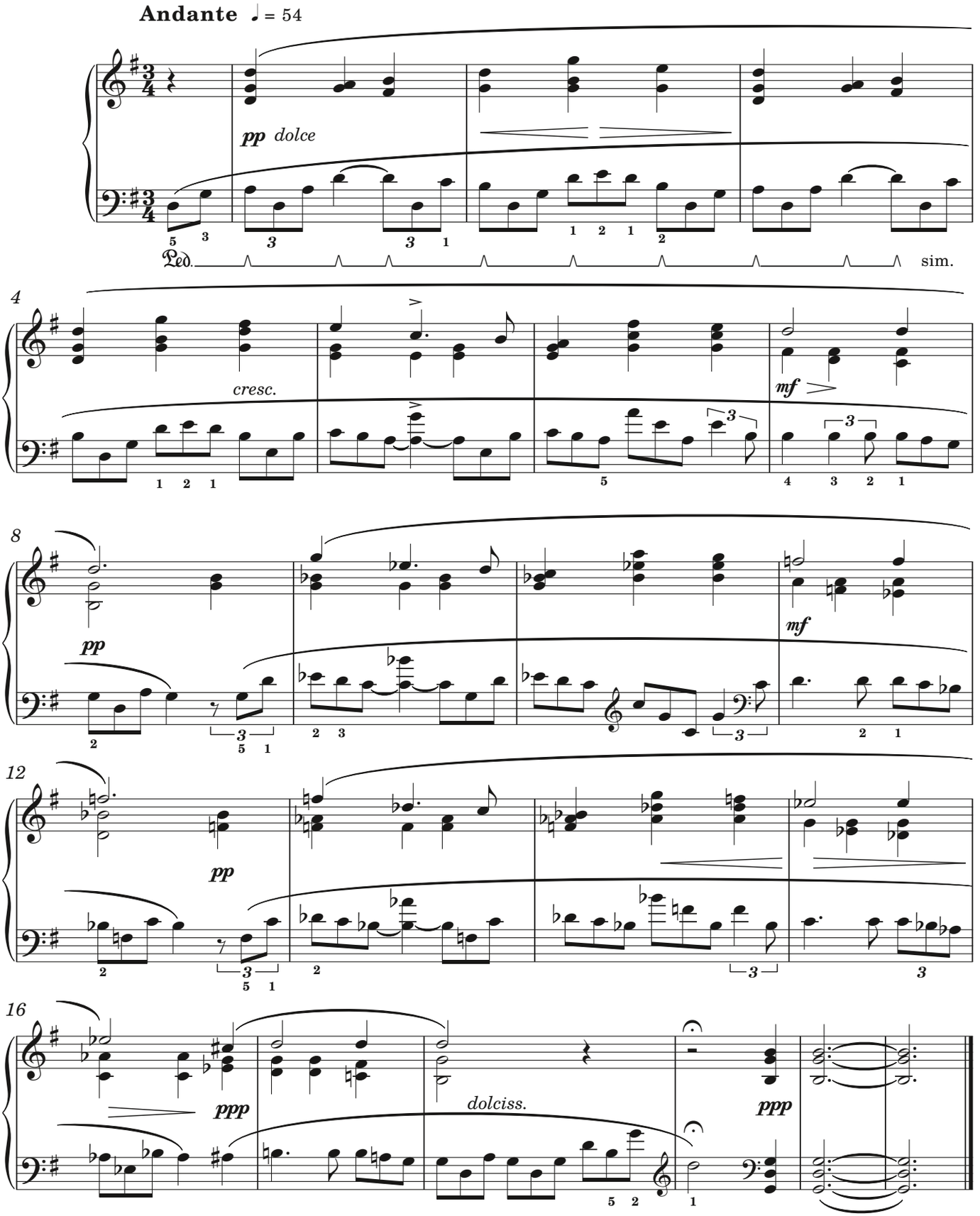
Prélude in G op 13 no 3

INTERMEDIATE

The Russian composer and pianist Alexander Scriabin wrote préludes throughout his life. This reflective piece comes from a set of six préludes dating from 1895. To find out more, see the article on Scriabin and his music in *Pianist* No 85.

Playing tips: There is no fingering for the RH – that's because it speaks for itself, really. Some help has been given to the LH. Voice the RH chords and try to work out where the flowing melody moves. It's not so easy to pinpoint, as it's a free type of melody. From beginning to end, the melody should sound like one long fluid line.

Pedal tips: As you can see, it's one pedal change per beat, so three per bar.



TRACK 10

WATCH CHENYIN LI PLAY THIS PIECE AT WWW.PIANISTMAGAZINE.COM

Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918)

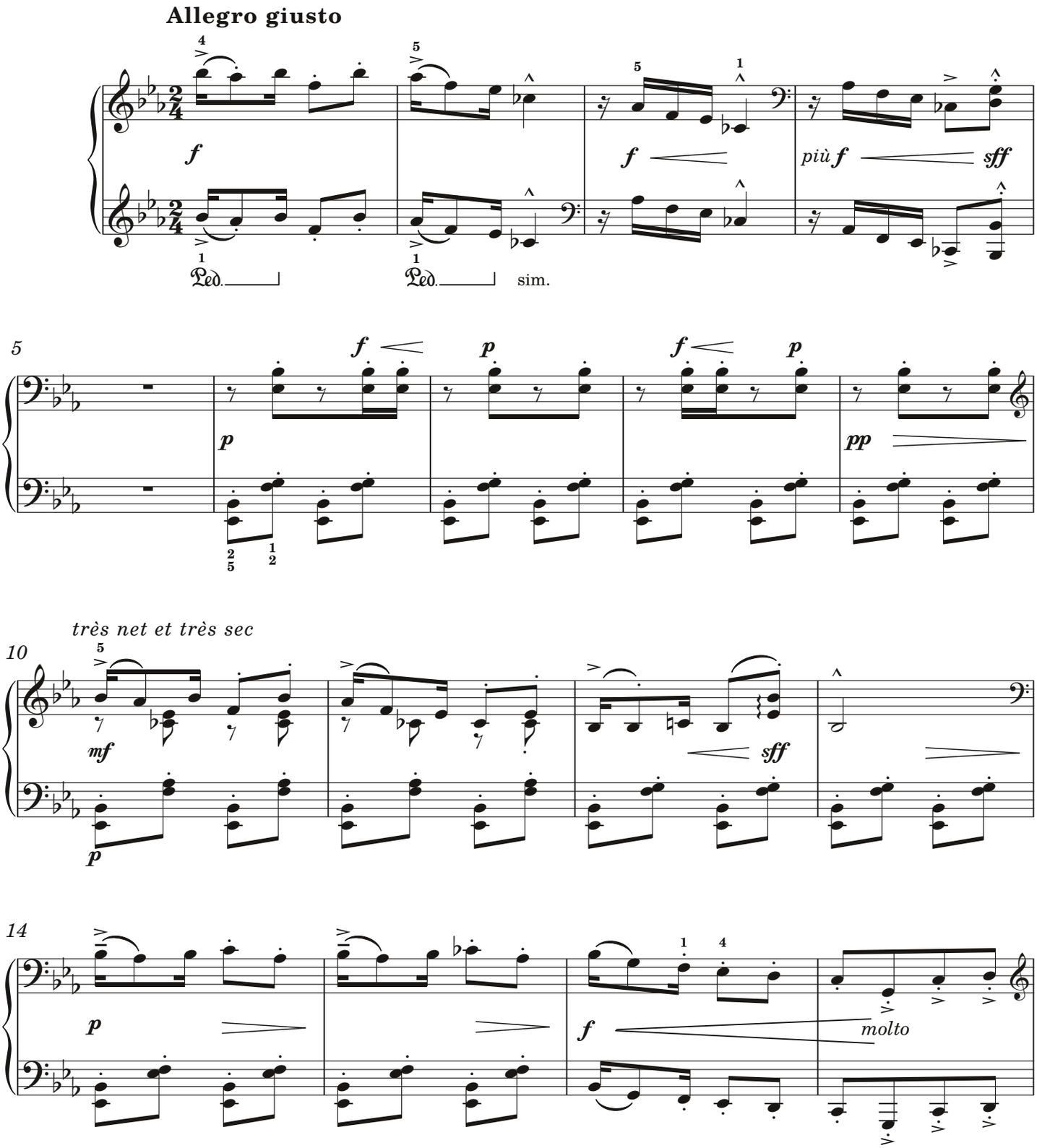
Golliwog's Cakewalk, No 6 from *Children's Corner*

INTERMEDIATE/ ADVANCED

'Golliwog's Cakewalk' is the third piece in this issue written for a composer's daughter (CPE Bach's *La Carolina* and the Schumann sonata movement are the others), in this case Debussy's infant daughter Claude-Emma 'Chouchou'. The cakewalk was an African-American ragtime-style dance full of syncopation, as you'll soon discover.

Playing tips: This piece demands speed and quick articulation, so aim to keep the wrists as loose as you can. There should be a certain feeling of 'attack' and playfulness throughout. The LH should move over the RH at bar 26. Bring out a different colour at bar 26 – you should try to suddenly reduce the sound down to *piano*. Lots of sharp contrasts are needed throughout this piece. Bar 47 marks a new section – it should be slower and more 'luxurious', but still with humour. Bar 86 and onwards should have a lovely anticipated feeling that leads intriguingly back to the return of the opening (bar 92). Make the ending dramatic!

Pedal tips: A short dab on the beginning of each bar, to be raised before the second beat. Use more pedal at the 'Cédez' section that begins bar 61.



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Golliwog's Cakewalk, No 6 from *Children's Corner*

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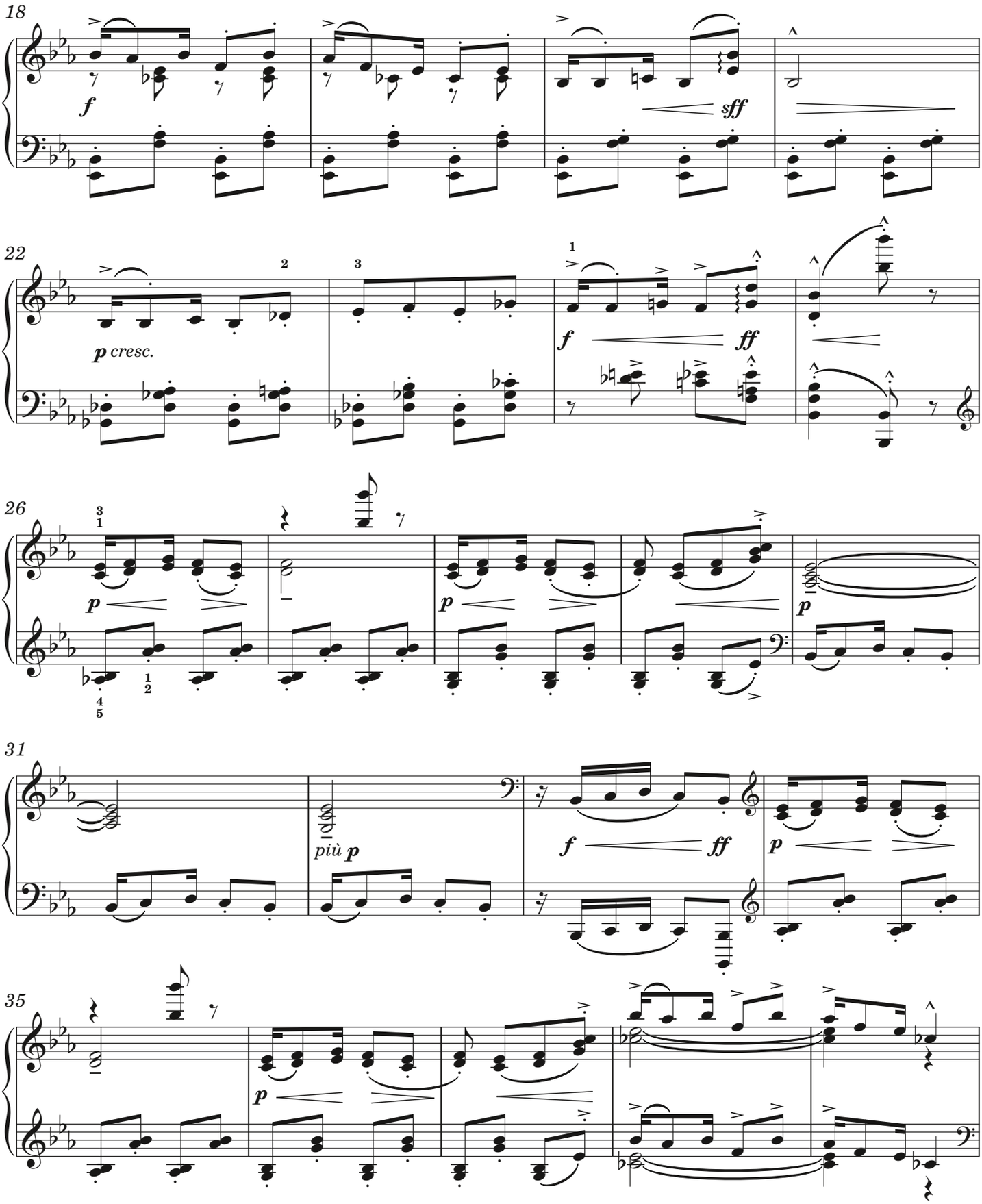

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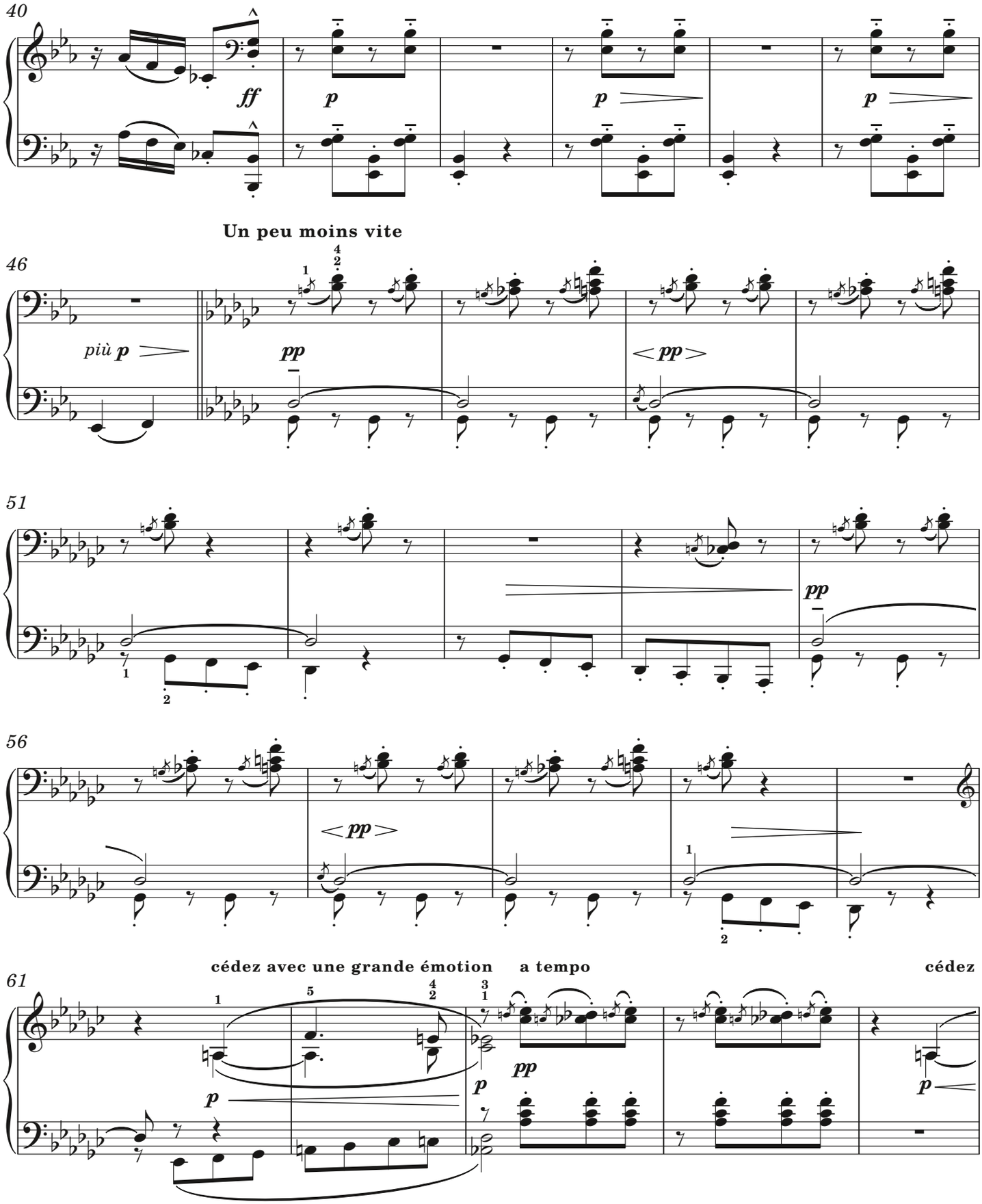

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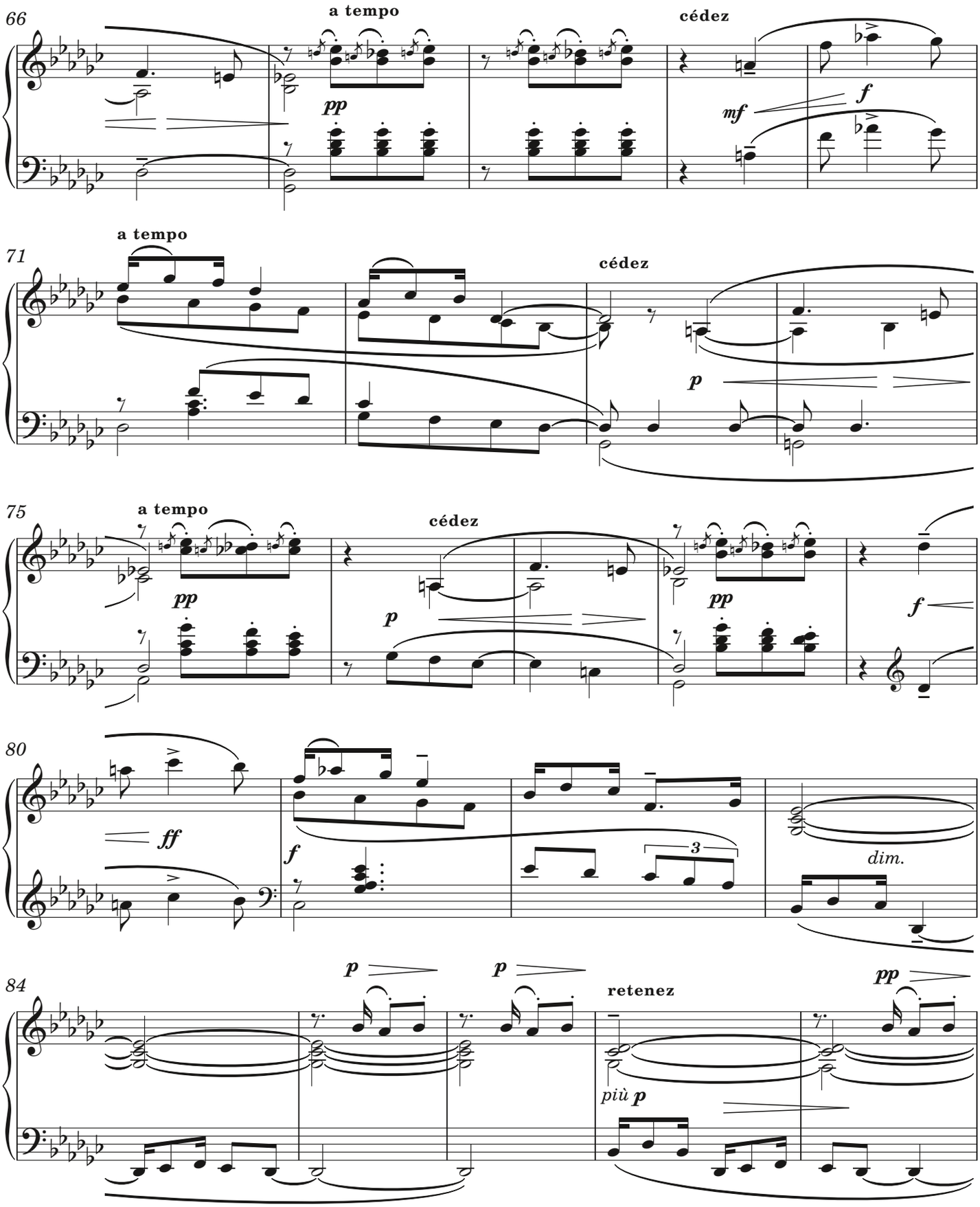

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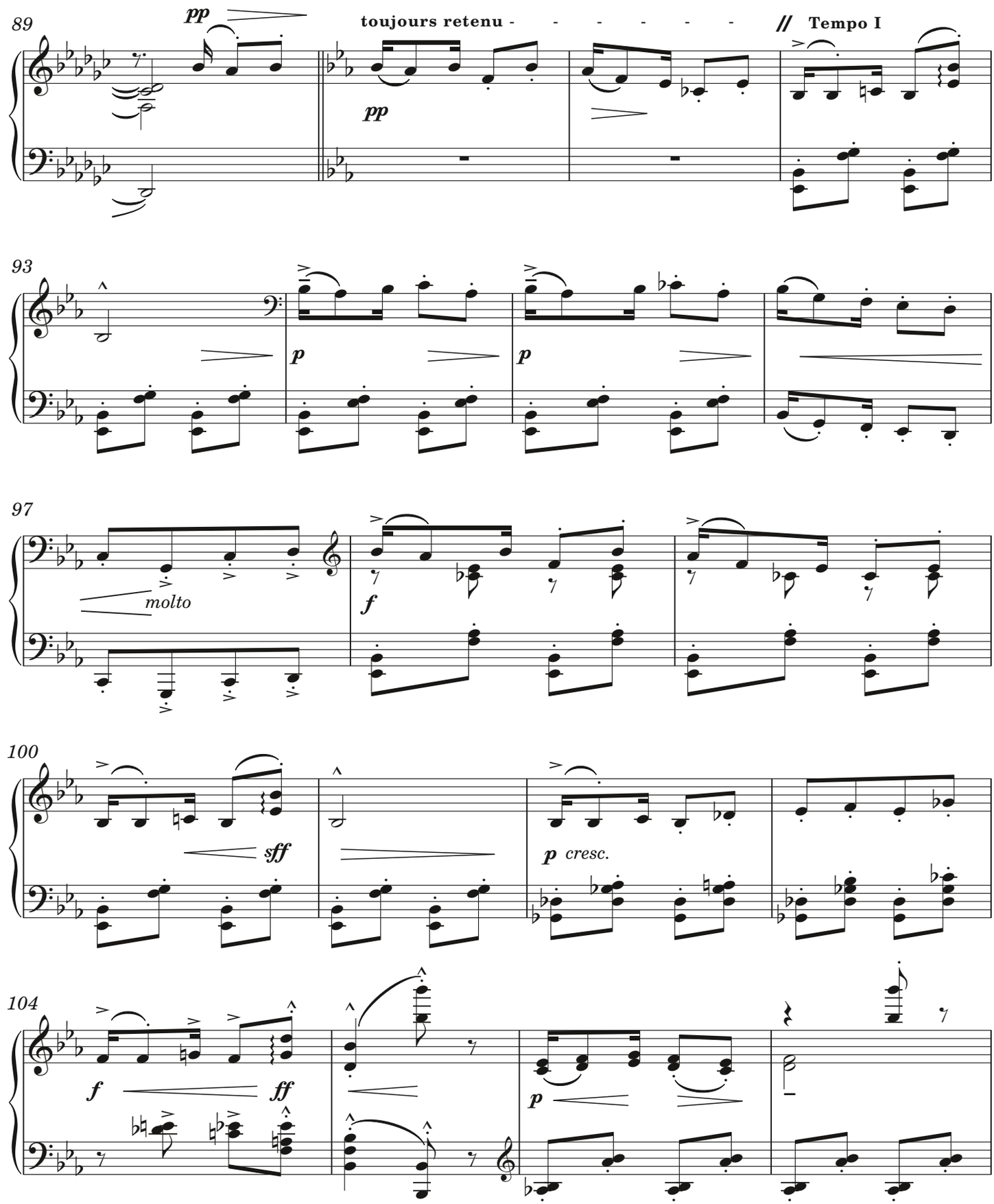

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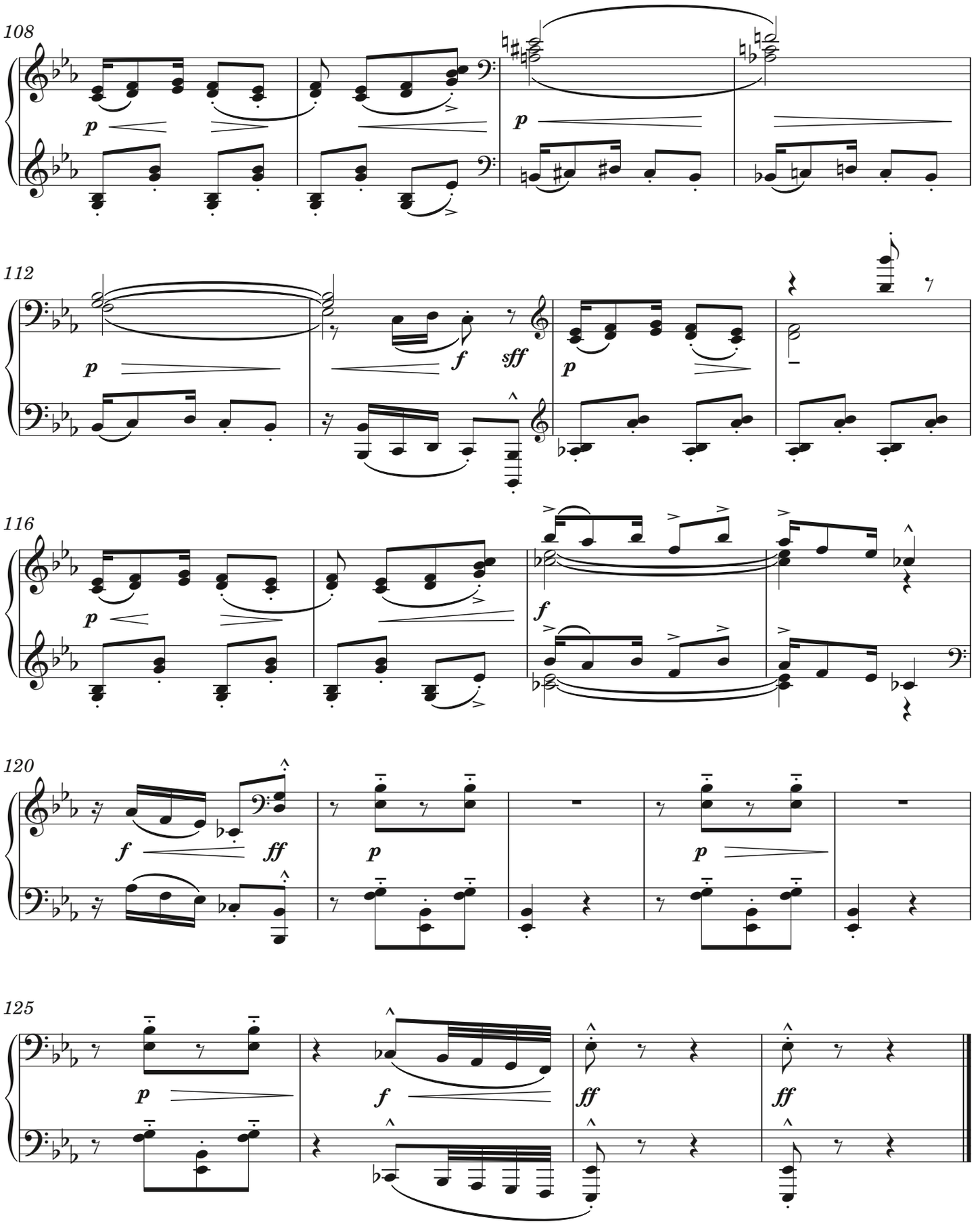


TRACK 11

DON'T MISS LUCY PARHAM'S LESSON ON THIS PIECE PAGE 24

Cécile CHAMINADE (1857-1944)

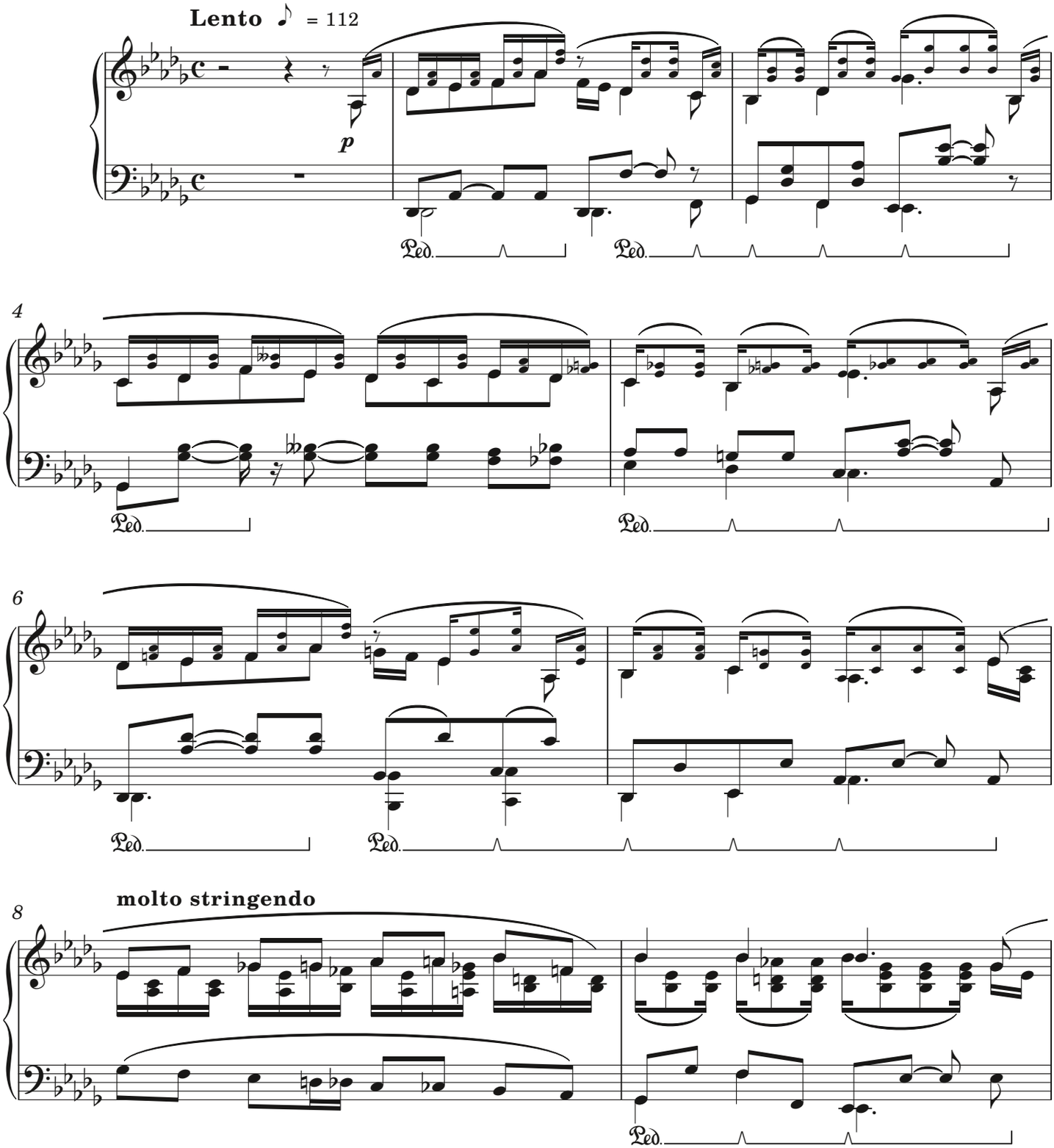
Automne op 35 no 2

ADVANCED

The talented Cécile Chaminade was not allowed by her father to study at the Paris Conservatoire, but she studied privately with top musicians nonetheless. She wrote many character pieces for the piano, including the Six Etudes de Concert op 35 of 1886. Chaminade was very popular in the US, and toured that country in 1908.

Playing and pedal tips: All is revealed in Lucy Parham's 'How to Play' on page 24. You will see that there aren't any fingerings marked on to the score. Lucy suggests that the pianist decides on their own. Pedalling has been added for guidance.

Read Lucy Parham's step-by-step lesson on this piece on page 24.

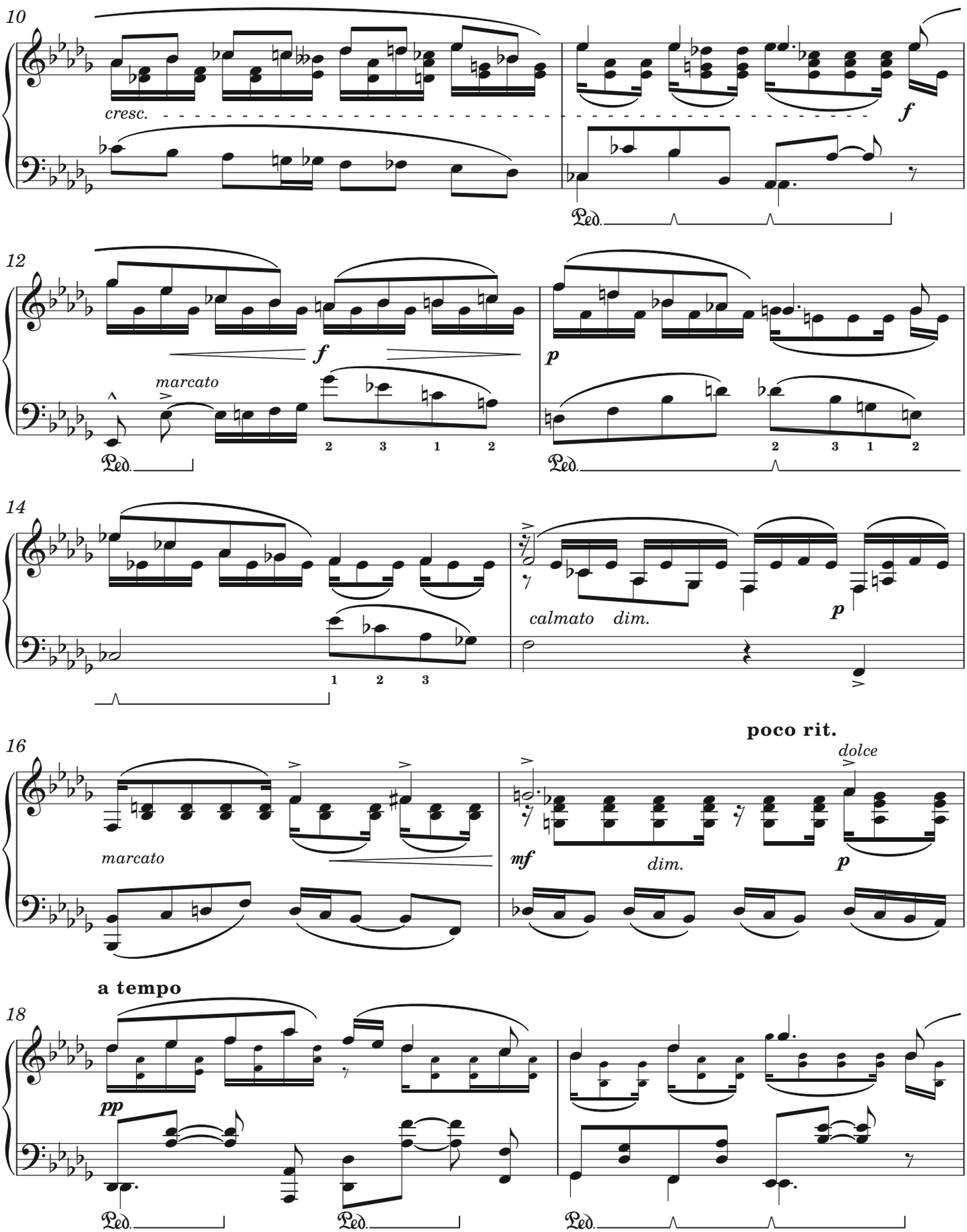


TRACK 11

Cécile CHAMINADE (1857-1944)

Automne op 35 no 2

ADVANCED



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Automne op 35 no 2

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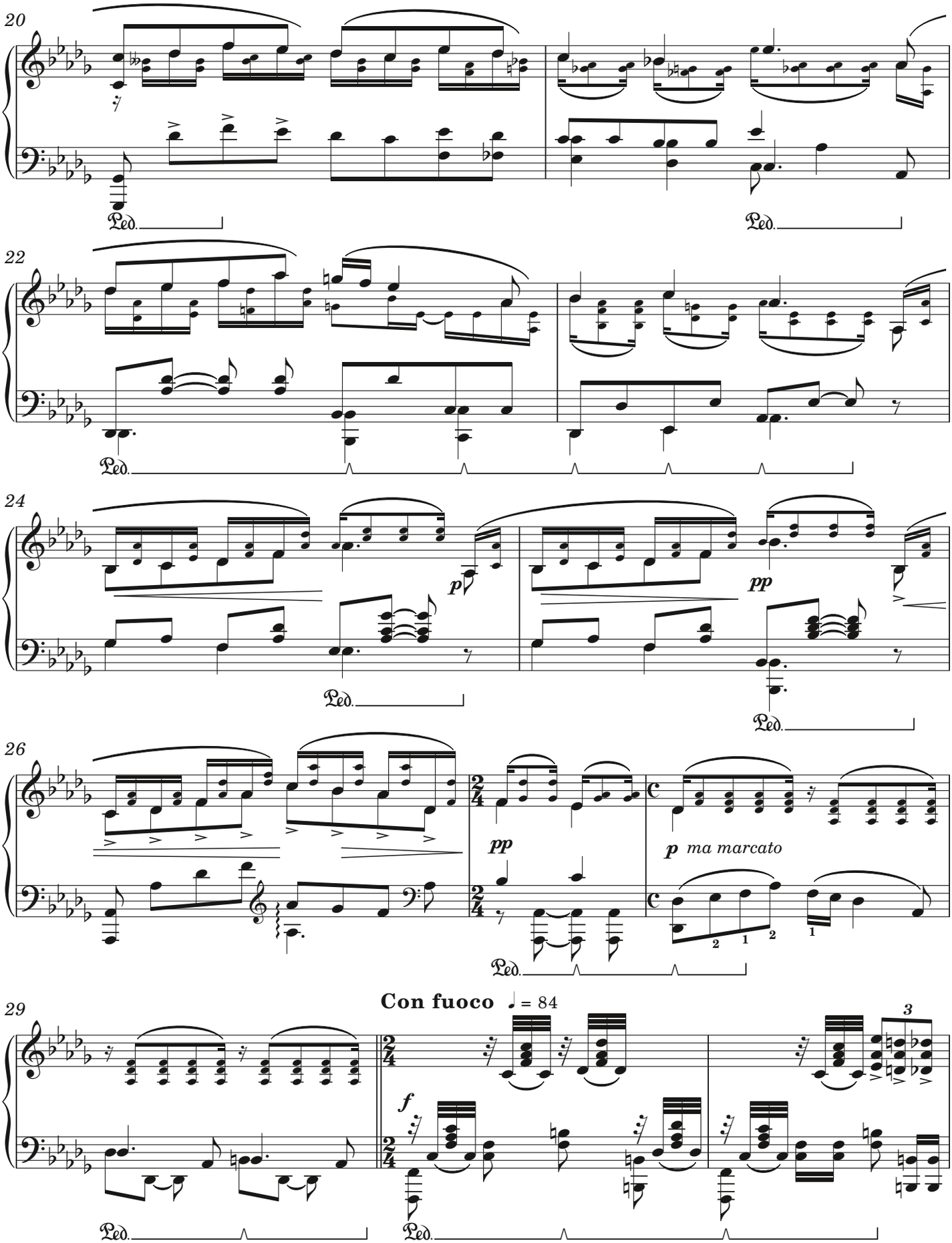

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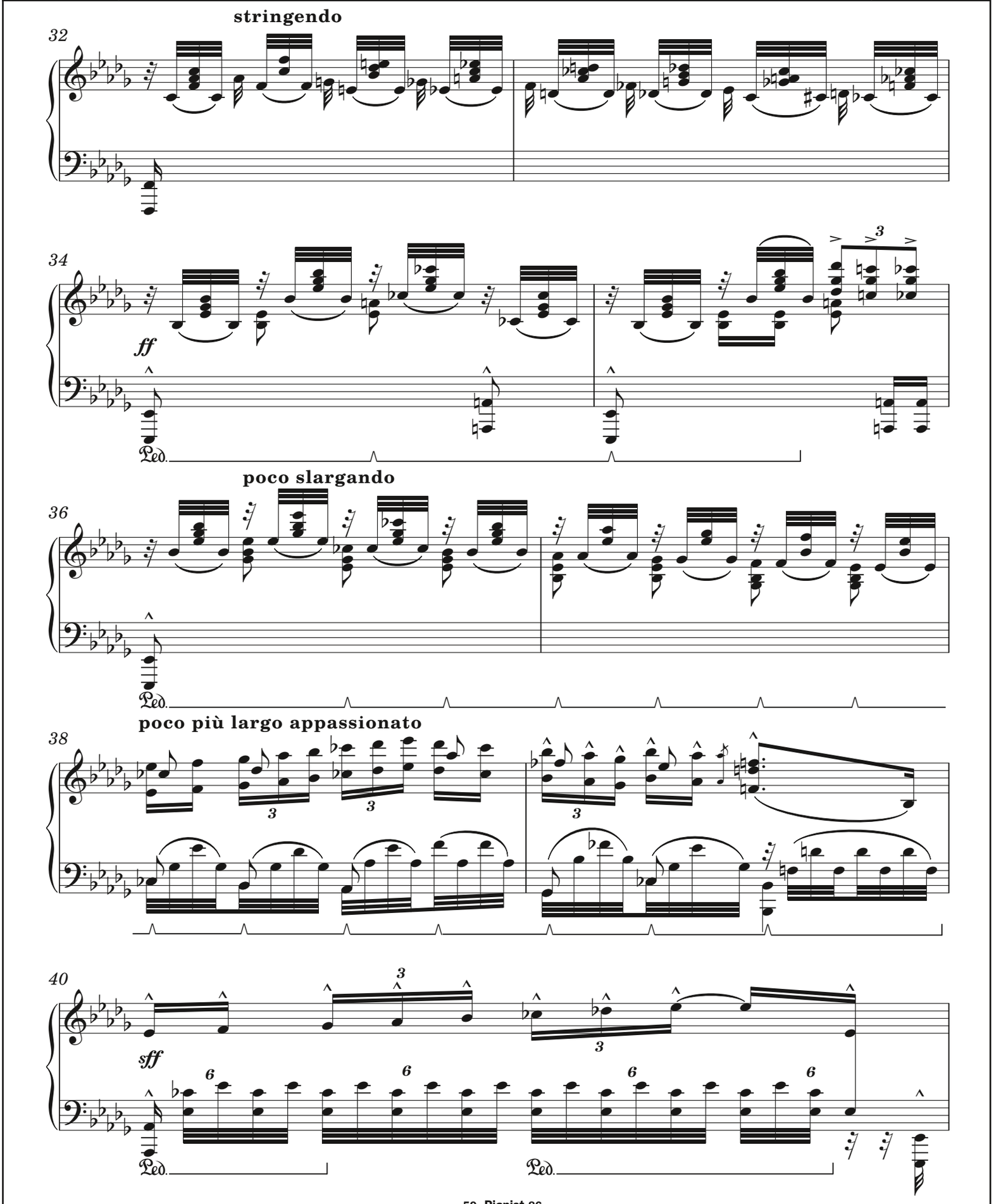

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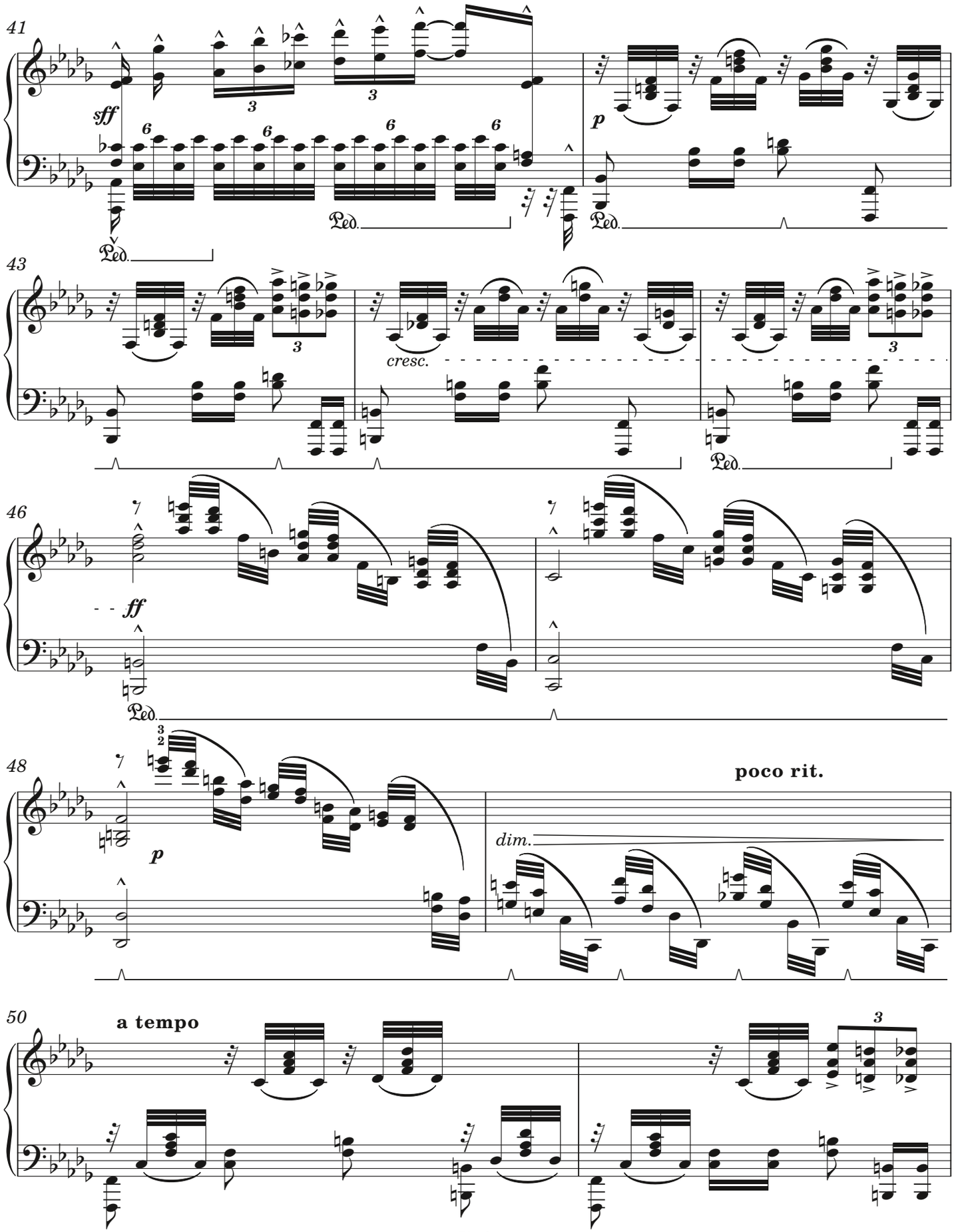

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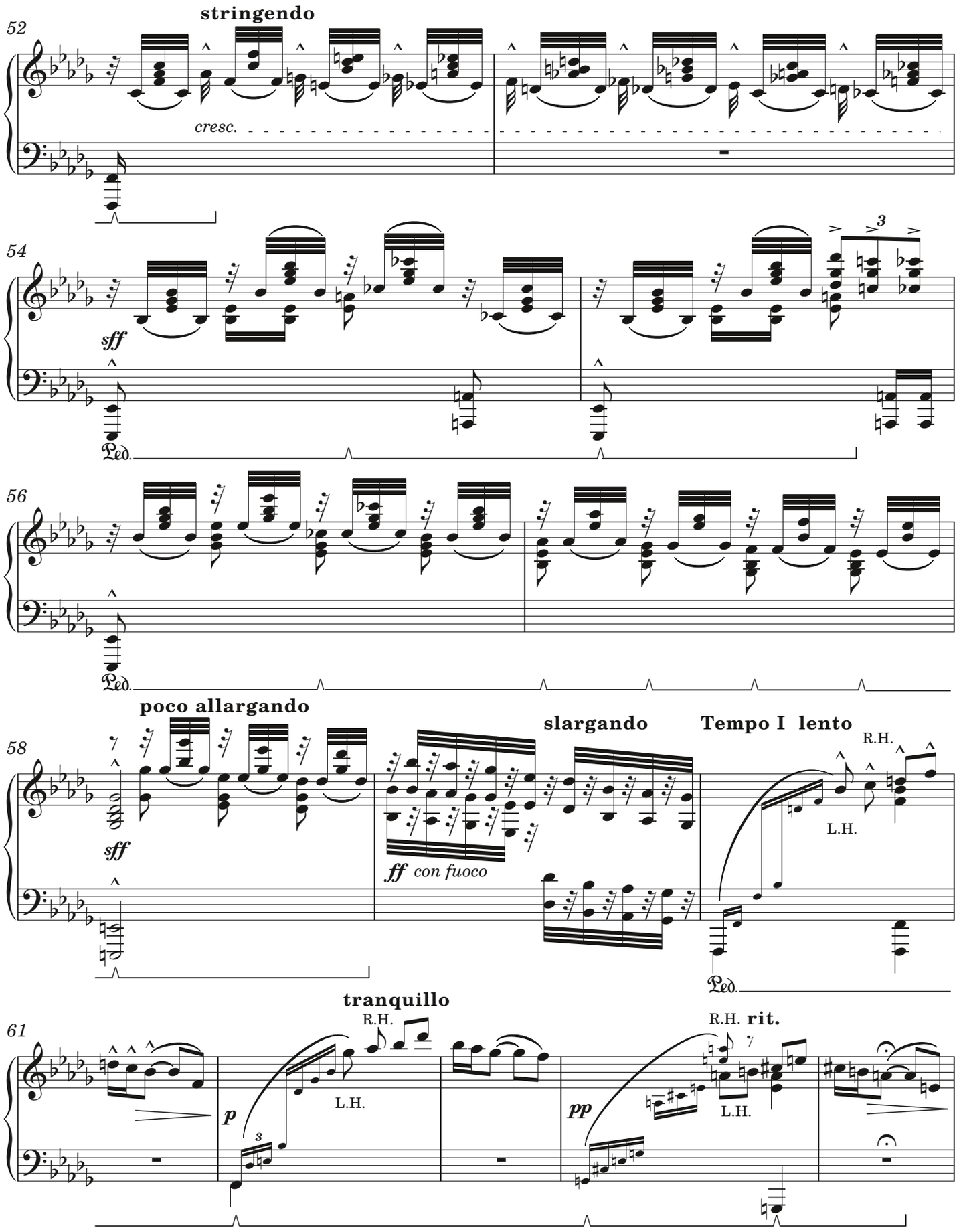

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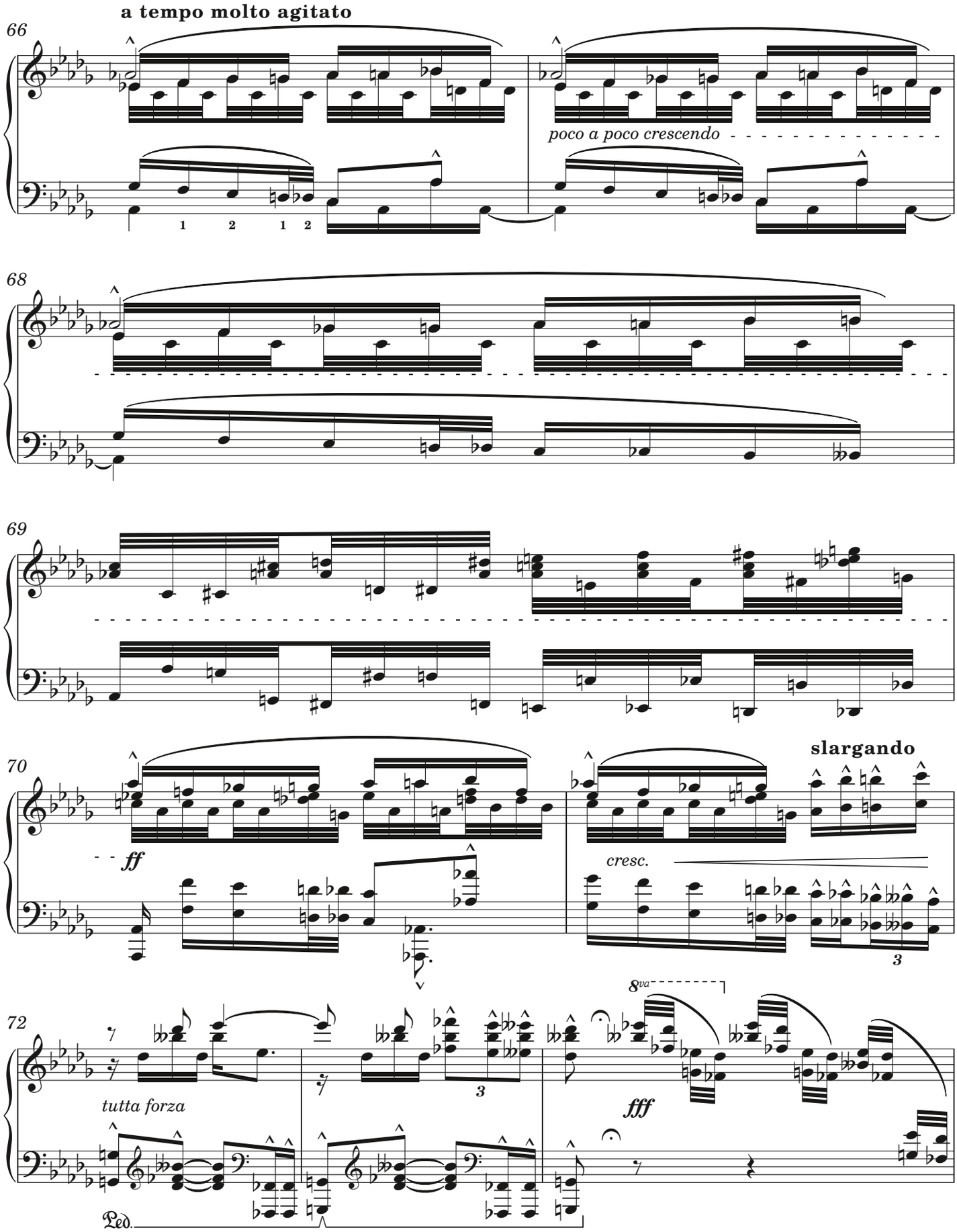

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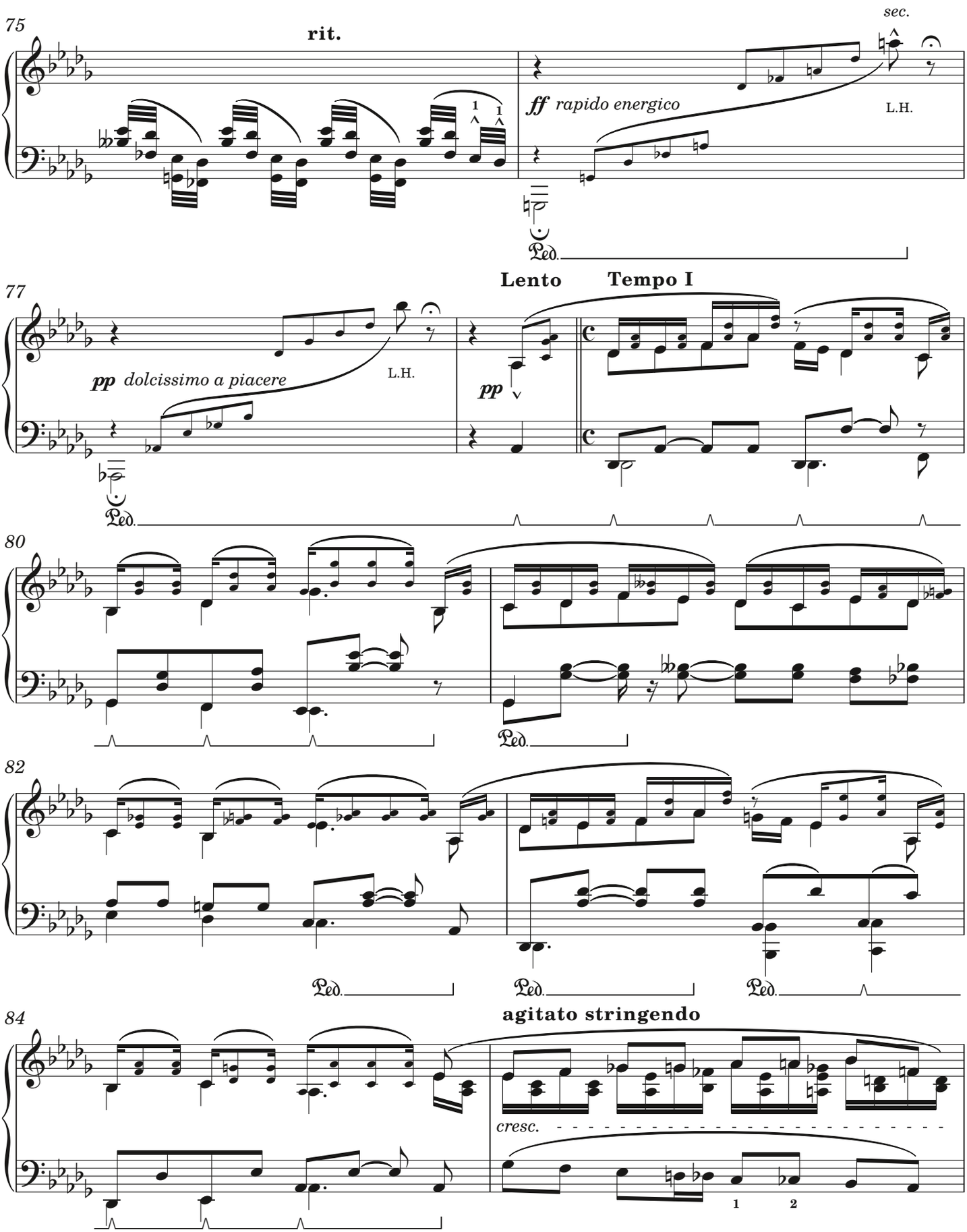

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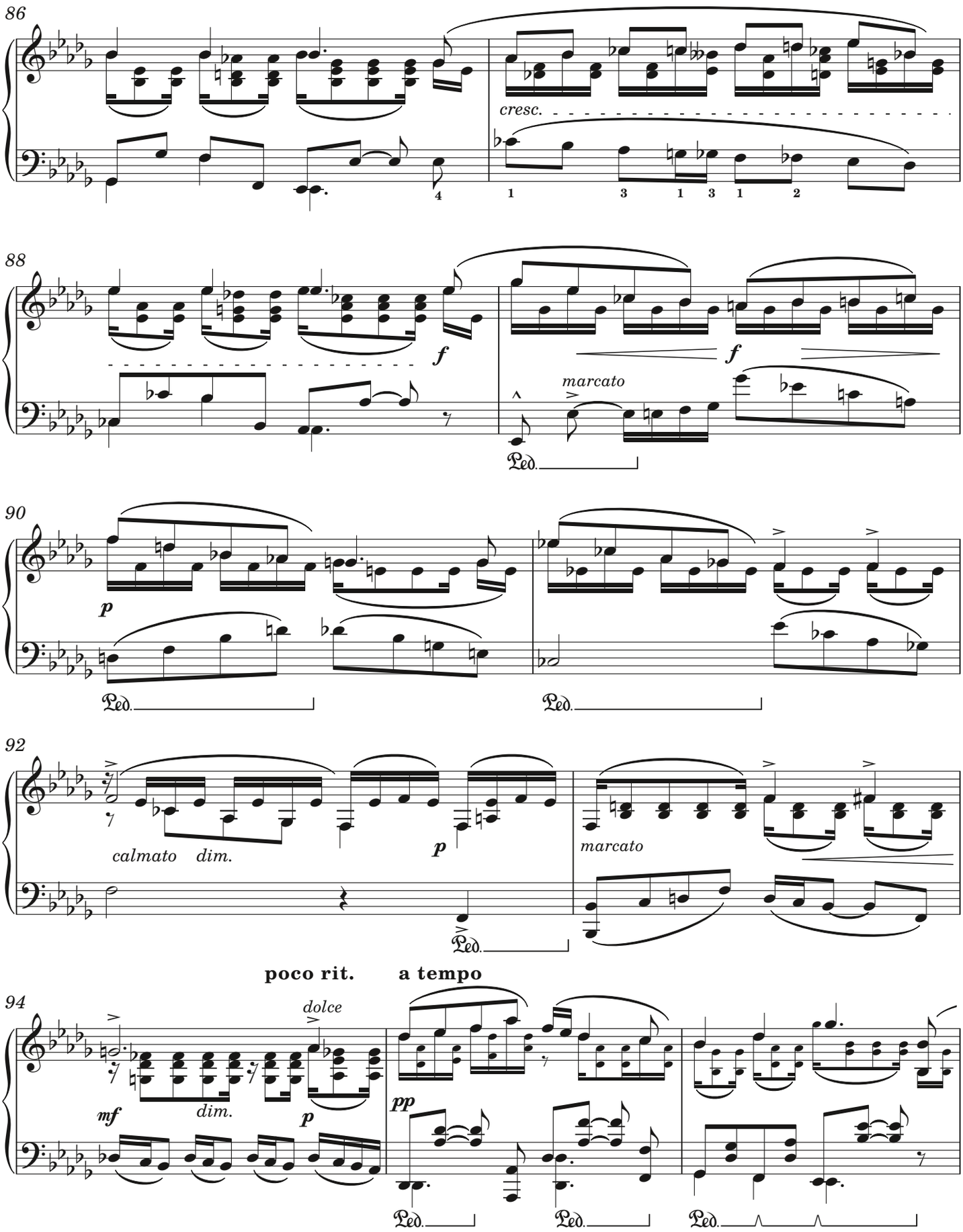

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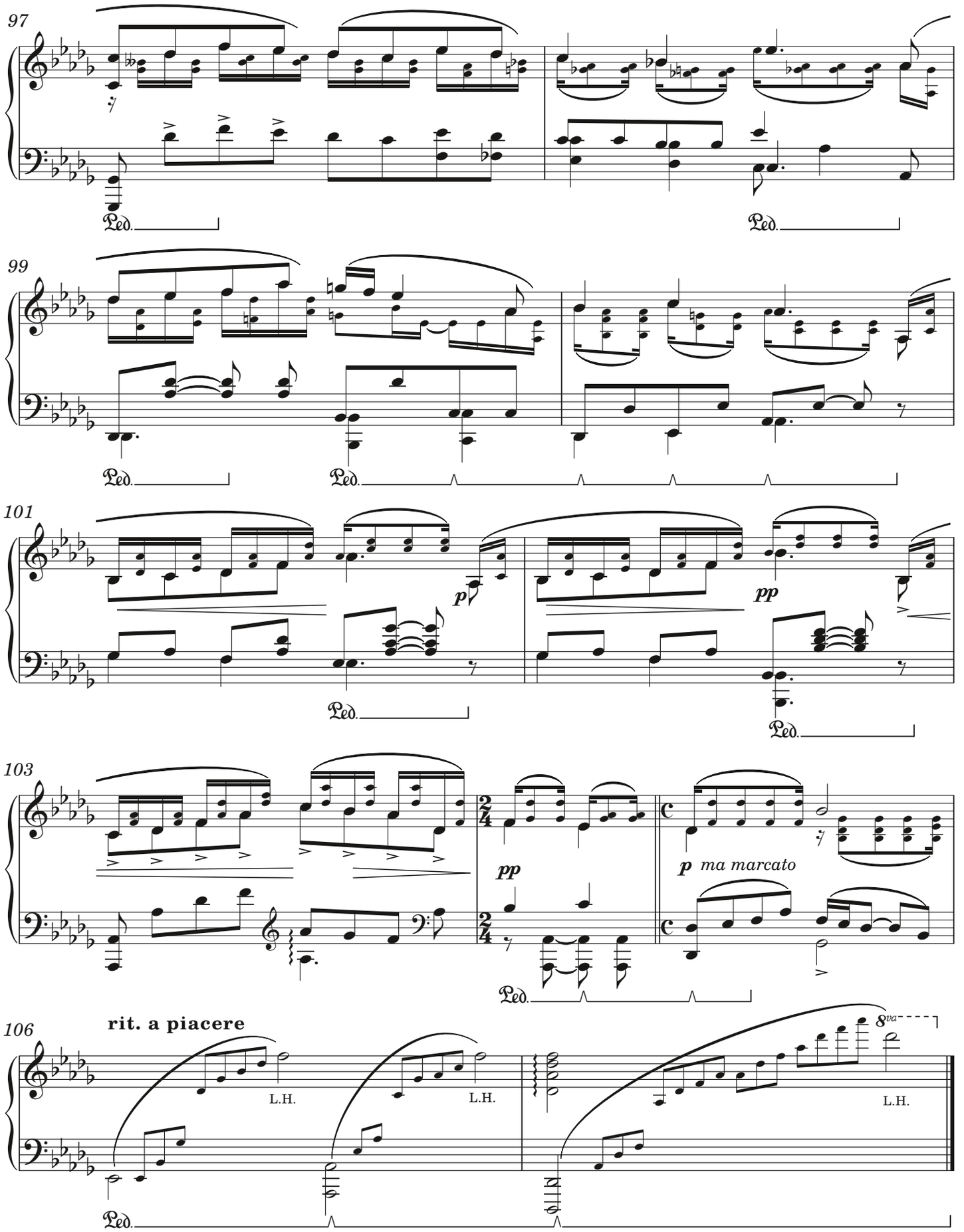

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DIY MUSICIAN

As he comes to the end of a UK tour, Emmanuel Vass – whose latest solo disc, *Sonic Waves*, has just topped the UK classical charts – talks to **Erica Worth** about what it's like to be his own agent

What made you decide to become a pianist?
When I was six, I asked my parents for a glockenspiel (you know – one of those Fisher-Price ones we all had) and I really enjoyed it. They could see I was making a lot of tunes, and they weren't musical at all. I started piano lessons around age of seven. I took lessons locally at first, and then at 15, I went to the Yorkshire Young Musicians, which is a junior conservatoire. Then I went on to study at the Royal Northern College of Music, with John Gough, on a Leverhulme fellowship. I enjoyed my studies a lot – it did a great deal for my playing and my technique, and gave me a lot of confidence.

You are a concert pianist, yet you are also your own agent. How did that come about?
It just kind of happened. After I graduated in 2011, I performed for the Prince of Monaco alongside Lulu! And then I did my first BBC Radio 3 broadcast as part of a masterclass. I began to realise that the internet is such a powerful tool these days that I could book my own dates, organise my own tours and set up my own publicity via YouTube and social media. I am very much a DIY musician! I use the internet to speak to people who matter. So far it's got me to No 1 in the UK official Classical Charts (with my latest CD, *Sonic Waves*), broadcasts on Classic FM, BBC Radio 3 and BBC World Service. That's all through the internet.

What are the greatest challenges of not having an agent?
Time management is tricky and also having to think in a business-like way. It's a very different mind-set from that of an artist. One side of me has to be selling, promoting and making a product. The other side has to be sculpting an artistic sound, listening carefully and then producing a great sound.

How do you juggle your time?
It's been exhausting, really, because I work full-time as a lecturer and piano teacher. Alongside that I have had to practise, book tour dates, sort the marketing, and fund everything – both for the tour and the CD. I've been waking up at five every morning, which was exhilarating of course, but something I will not miss now that the tour's over!

What has been your secret for success?
Persistence, perseverance and creating a product that is sellable to a market but also artistically sound. I wouldn't have caught the attention of Radio 3 or Classic FM unless my artistry was top notch. Then you have to find the balance between the two. My market is both the fans of classical music and new audiences who don't think classical music is for them. That's why my first disc, *From Bach to Bond*, had James Bond themes on it. And *Sonic Waves* contains some sea shanties. I also think you have to take control of your own destiny. I am not interested in being passive or reacting to things. I want to be proactive and make things happen.

Did you ever feel like giving up?
It was a big challenge getting my CD to the top of the charts myself, and if I hadn't raised the money through Kickstarter I wouldn't have been able to do it. I also found it difficult having to earn money to pay my bills while at the same time trying to pursue my ambitions. People said it's too hard to do what you're doing by yourself. A lot of people said I needed a record label, and I think I've proven that I don't!

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?
Still working in music education. That's really important to educate the next generation. And doing things in a new way to inspire new audiences. Opening up the classical music world to show how diverse and amazing it is. It's not just for one type of person. It's inclusive.

If you could guide other young, aspiring pianists, what would you tell them?
Be open-minded and do not underestimate your own power to get things done.

All the music on your *Sonic Waves* CD is water-inspired [Debussy's *Reflets dans l'eau*, Chopin's 'Raindrop' Prélude, etc]. Why is that?
We're an island nation and I grew up not so far from the water. The piano is essentially a wooden box with metal strings upon which composers can create this fantastic 'fluid' sound. That's what I wanted to explore. On the disc, there are three arrangements of sea shanties. Once upon a time, as a country we relied on our navy to rule the world. I wanted to explore our heritage that way.

Was it easy to make these arrangements?
I find it easy – as pianists, we already have the knowledge of harmony and line. Composing and arranging are important because they create new material, and also re-create such melodies as the sea shanties. People know what they are. I just like creating new things as well as developing the old masters.

The cover picture on the front of *Sonic Waves* is very inventive [Vass is sitting at a grand piano, on the sand, on the edge of the sea]. That must have been hard to create.
With great difficulty, yes! The piano was sitting on wooden boards on the sand and the boards were then airbrushed out. We actually did put the piano there – it's a true picture. I can't remember the make of piano – it was quite old and of course not that expensive. But it worked for the photo! ■

To find out about Sonic Waves, Bach to Bond and Emmanuel Vass's future tour dates, visit his website, www.emmanuelvass.co.uk

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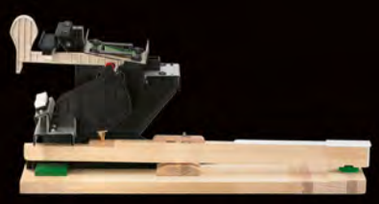

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Vienna Grand

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HIGH ANXIETY

Even the pros get performance anxiety, so don't let it get the best of you! John Evans seeks out old and new techniques for dealing with stage fright

On our own and in the privacy of our homes, we think we can play like Rubinstein, but introduce a spectator and our technique evaporates, our heart races, the fluffs multiply and the excuses tumble forth. It's called nerves, and its causes lie in many things, including a fear of failure and a heightened awareness of one's listener, accompanied by physiological changes over which, seemingly, we have no control.

The good news? Even the pros experience it. Thirty years ago, pianist Michael Roll, winner of the first Leeds Piano Competition in 1963, was in the middle of performing Rachmaninov's Etudes-tableaux at a packed concert hall in Japan when he stopped, stood up and walked off stage.

'The pieces were new to me and I didn't feel completely on top of them,' Roll says. 'I was afraid of forgetting the music and of making mistakes. I had jet-lag, too, and felt sick. In the end it was too much for me, so I walked off in the middle of the performance.' After minutes that must have felt like hours, he returned to the platform to continue the performance – but only after his wife Juliana Markova, at that time also a concert pianist, had pushed him back on.

Today, Roll is able to talk openly about the experience and freely admits that, especially when he was younger, concert nerves were a serious problem for him. 'It wouldn't be just my hands that were shaking, but my feet as well,' he says. 'I have my own reasons for feeling fear which I'm not going to divulge, because each person has their own private world of fear. It can be connected with physical ailments or psychological things. They're all deeply personal things that shouldn't be revealed. We all have our demons.'

Vladimir Horowitz certainly had his. He famously suffered from stage fright and retired at least four times because of it. Sviatoslav Richter, too, battled his demons. Towards the end of his career, the pianist abandoned playing from memory in favour of playing from music, such was his fear of memory lapses.

For a period, Steven Osborne was plagued by similar fears. The pianist recalls playing Mozart's Piano Concerto No 23 when, out of the blue, he began to worry about forgetting the next note. 'The feeling got stronger and stronger,' he says. 'I didn't actually forget anything but it felt like the water was rising and lapping just under my nose.'

A few years later the unthinkable happened when he experienced a series of memory lapses while performing Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 1. 'It was so disturbing, and it kept happening,' he says. 'I really began to wonder whether my career was over.'

Confronting the fear

Stage fright, performance anxiety, nerves… call it what you will, but especially for pianists – where accuracy and virtuosity are the least an audience expects – it can be disabling and career-threatening.

© Spike Gerrell for *Pianist*

5 WAYS TO BEAT NERVES

We can't guarantee these methods will work for you, but just as playing the piano requires work, so does conquering your anxieties.

Practise performing

Invite your partner or a few friends to listen to you. Make an event of it, removing yourself from the room and, once your audience is settled, enter and play. Ensure the atmosphere is friendly but respectful.

Sing the music when you practise

s a great way to immerse yourself in the music, while vocalising ırases can help give them shape and fluency. Your oxygen levels will rise as you breathe more deeply and you'll feel more confident and tgoing. In time, playing the piano will feel less like something you in private.

Fight negativity

ı't indulge those negative thoughts. They will drag you down and ɔurage failure. Instead, shut them out and admit only positive ıghts to enter your music zone.

Enjoy it

Playing the piano is fun and very special. Not everyone can do it – but you can. Treat your performance as an opportunity to share your gift and your music with others. They're not interested in finding fault; they want to be moved and inspired.

And one last thing – love your nerves!

It's your body's way of telling you, you're ready to play. So go out there and sock it to 'em!

However, it's a tricky subject to broach and not that well understood. When I was a student pianist at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) and, later, at the Royal College of Music, the condition was rarely discussed, as if to discuss it might encourage it.

How times have changed. Bryan Fox is one of two counsellors at the RNCM who work with up to 200 students each year on a range of personal issues, many of them relating to performance anxiety. However, rather than using catch-all labels such as 'performance anxiety' or 'nerves', a label which, incidentally, he refuses to use, Fox prefers to regard each student's condition as uniquely personal, worthy of more specific descriptors and with origins that often pre-date their arrival at college.

'I'm not a doctor; I'm a humanist,' Fox says. 'I believe the person best placed to find a solution to the issue they're struggling with, is themselves. It's my responsibility to provide the environment that allows a student to explore their condition as thoroughly and deeply as they need to, in combination with any insights and experiences I can offer.'

With your fingers turning to mush and your feet shaking uncontrollably with nerves, Fox's person-centred fix may sound like mumbo-jumbo. However, these are merely the symptoms – Fox is concerned more with the root causes. If we begin to understand these, he says, we can begin to gain control.

Often, one of those root causes is the term Fox loathes even more than nerves – 'perfection'. To Fox it suggests 'finished' when, in fact, everything we do as human beings is work in progress. 'Among musicians there's a gap between their fingertips and their aspiration, otherwise known as "perfection",' says Fox. 'The trouble is, people make the mistake of focusing on that gap, instead of regarding it simply as an extension of their arm.

'I remember hearing an interview with the singer Alison Krauss. She said, "I can't be perfect, but I can excel". And that's the point: being a performer should be about excelling – about going on from where you are. It's absolutely not about setting unrealistic expectations for yourself or worse, being "perfect".'

The trouble is, classical musicians in particular, inhabit a world that values excellence above everything else. In an attempt to achieve it, they are criticised by their teachers and by themselves to the point that their sense of self-worth can be seriously undermined. However, according to Fox, everything has value – even the stuff you get wrong.

> 'BEING A PERFORMER SHOULD BE ABOUT EXCELLING – ABOUT GOING ON FROM WHERE YOU ARE. IT'S ABSOLUTELY NOT ABOUT SETTING UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR YOURSELF, OR WORSE, BEING "PERFECT"'
>
> **-Bryan Fox, Royal Northern College of Music**

tudents and teachers should think in terms of criticism but of evaluation,' he says. 'If you can develop ıse of self-worth, and so often my work comes back to that, you stand a good chance of beating whatever issue you're struggling with. It's like saying, "I may not be Rubinstein but I've got ıething to say, and I'm going to ɔut there and say it."'

good place to start, he says, is ıowledging the progress you've made as a pianist so far. Unfortunately, many students concentrate on what they're not able to do. As a result, the ground beneath their feet is very shaky. Worse still, it is at its shakiest just before they go on stage.

This critical period forms a key element of the performance simulator at the Royal College of Music (RCM), where students can play to a virtual audience and develop their public-facing skills.

'Peak physiological arousal happens in those last few minutes before a performer goes out on stage,' says Aaron Williamon, Professor of Performance Science at the RCM. 'When they start worrying that they're going to be judged is when the really negative thinking begins.'

To teach students how to manage this potentially disastrous time, the simulator gives RCM students the same backstage experience they'd have in a real setting. They're greeted by a backstage manager before being sent to a green room to warm up and change. A few minutes later they walk to the backstage area where they can see the backstage manager communicating with the front of house, and see and hear the virtual audience projected onto a screen. Finally, they're required to wait for three or four minutes for 'latecomers' before being sent out to play. That's when the real fun begins.

A couple of years ago, Williamon and his team wirelessly connected the pianist Melvyn Tan to an electrocardiogram and monitored his physiological responses while playing to 400 people at the Cheltenham Festival. Even with a performer as experienced and well rehearsed as Tan, the researchers observed a dramatic change in his heart response.

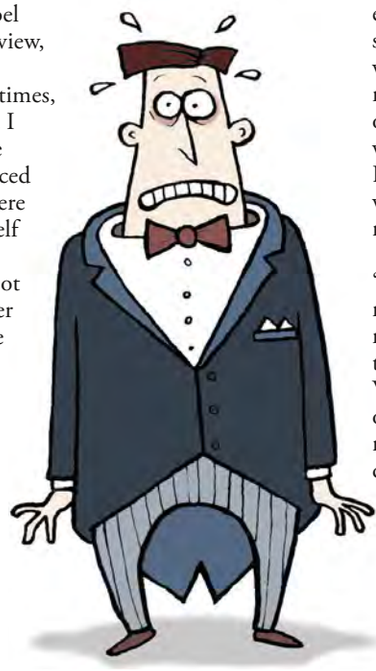
Fortunately, this did not worry Tan. He had long ago learned to accept this heightened activity as a signal that he was going to perform, and that it is a necessary component of such a special act. (By way of comparison, the researchers asked Tan to repeat his performance in his London studio; there was an equally dramatic decrease in his physiological activity.)

Unfortunately, says Williamon, Tan's acceptance of his on-stage responses is not shared by inexperienced students. As a result, and not having had enough opportunity to come to terms with their on-stage responses, they label them, negatively in Williamon's view, as 'anxiety'.

I know the feeling. Too many times, nerves have got the better of me. I remember playing a recital at the RNCM during which I experienced that classic out-of-body state where you feel you are observing yourself and almost willing the next mistake. Meanwhile, my right foot had turned to jelly and was flutter pedalling furiously. I finished the recital unable to breathe.

'Pretty predictably we can say that when people are performing, their body's in a different physical state than when it is in the safe environment of a practice room,' says Williamon. 'We'll see changes in heart rate and blood pressure. Some people interpret this as a sign that something may go wrong, and they have an anxiety reflex to it.'

So what's the cure?



Living in the moment

Steven Osborne's fix has been to embrace a state of mind called 'mindfulness'. In short, it's about living in the moment, rather than worrying about what has happened or what is to come, a problem that can afflict nervous performers. Crucially, it also encourages the person to accept the world, and themselves, as they are, a view Bryan Fox would be sure to endorse.

> 'NERVES ARE ABSOLUTELY NORMAL. I'VE NEVER MET A GOOD ARTIST WHO DOESN'T SUFFER THEM'
>
> **-Concert pianist Michael Roll**

'If [my playing isn't perfect], well never mind,' Osborne tells himself. 'I'm not a brain surgeon; no one's going to die. Anxieties like stage fright, at bottom, are a turning against the self. I think it's much more fruitful to try to be on good terms with every side of one's personality.'

For what it's worth, I eventually managed my nerves by singing the music as I practised it (which enabled me to immerse myself body and soul in the piece) and by refusing to indulge my negative thoughts. Instead, every time I feared failure, I imagined success.

Michael Roll, meanwhile, studied self-hypnosis.

'I am able to lightly meditate and enter a restful state before playing,' he says. 'I will lie on the floor anywhere with a pillow under my head and close my eyes. Unfortunately, its effects can be overridden by repertoire I'm not familiar with or haven't played for a long time. But it's now a long time since I didn't want to go out on stage. In any case, my nerves have improved with age.'

Aaron Williamon says for 'age', read 'experience'. He believes just as students must practise their instrument, they must practise performing as will. With the RCM performance stimulator, Williamon is trying give students more opportunities to practise performance rather than just their instrument. In so doing he's aiming to compress that experience of doing concerts and dealing with nerves into a shorter space of time. 'People fall into the trap of performing and then moving on but it's something you have to work on. Our simulator is not just a quick-fix for anxiety; it's a tool that enables students to practise performing.'

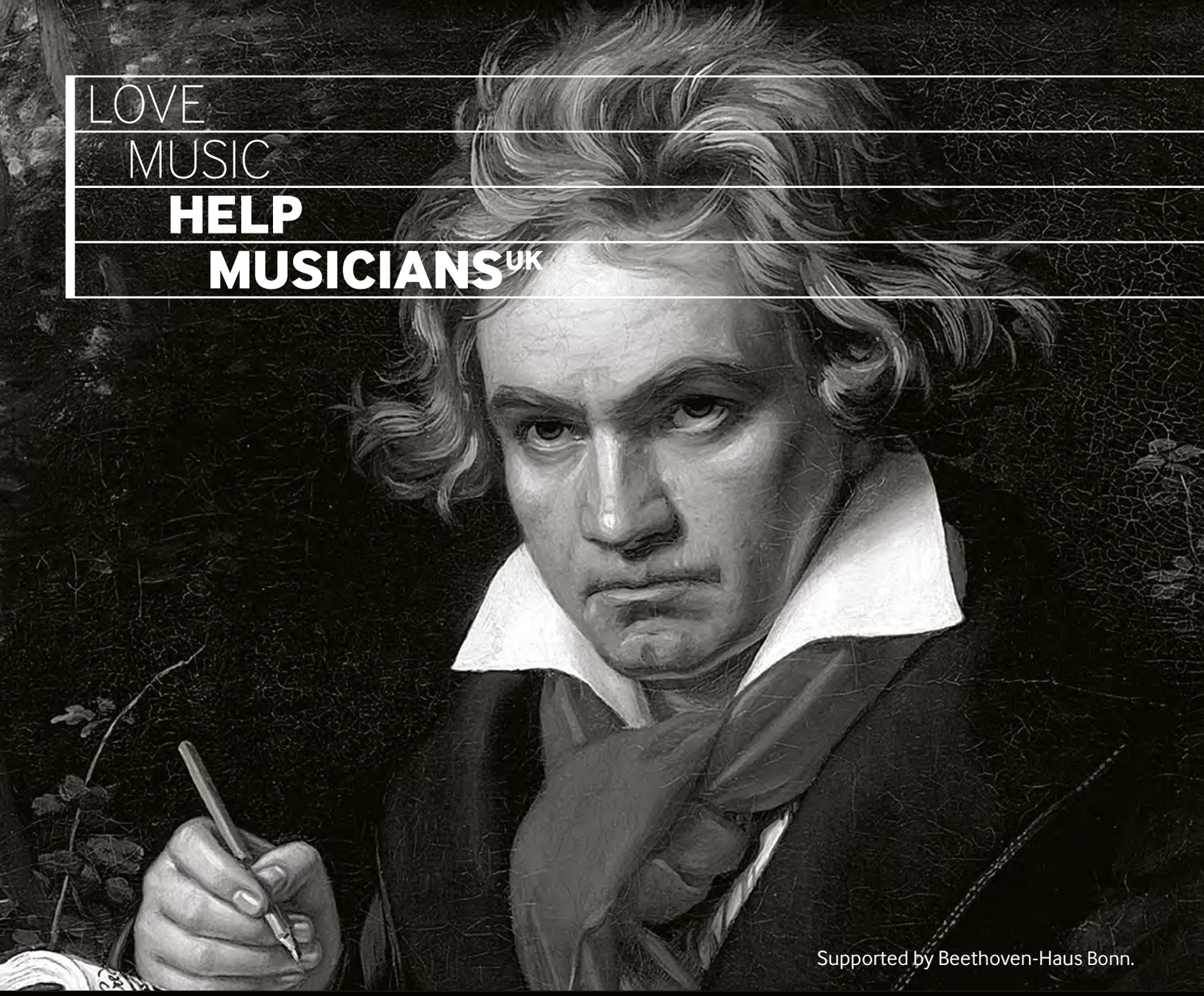
Meanwhile, Williamon and Fox, as well as their colleagues at most of the other leading UK music colleges, have devised a programme called Fit to Perform. Launching in 2016, its aim will be to help students to understand and experience the benefits that a good diet and exercise, plus positive psychology can bring to their performing.

Bizarrely, one of the things they may learn is how beneficial nerves can be to their playing.

'Nerves are absolutely normal,' says Michael Roll. 'I've never met a good artist who doesn't suffer them. I've met some great conductors backstage who were drinking very large whiskies before they went on. To relax him, another had his hair lovingly combed by his wife.

Roll continues: 'However, all of them knew that if you're a dead duck who suffers no nerves when he walks on stage and just plays all the right notes, it won't be a very interesting concert. As a performer, you want to be in that place between peace and excitement. Forget a few nerves-induced memory lapses or fluffed notes – a pianist who plays without any sensitivity is committing the worst crime of all in my book. Note-obsessed audiences would do well to remember that.'

In fact, Roll may just have put his finger(s) on it. As I discovered, one of the best ways to conquer nerves is to lose yourself in the music, rather than the notes. If it worked for me, it could, just, work for you too. ■



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The Key of Life

How and why do composers choose particular keys for their works? **Tim Stein** sheds some light on a tricky and intriguing question

Do composers really wake up in the morning and decide to write a piece of music in a certain key? Did Beethoven write his ever-popular 'Moonlight' Sonata in the rather gloomy key of C sharp minor because he had had a rough night on the town the night before? Or did Mozart, as the cheeky chappy depicted in the film *Amadeus*, write his Piano Concerto No 21 (more commonly known as the 'Elvira Madigan') in the uplifting key of C major just because some Austrian prince had paid him a tidy some of money and the sun was shining? I don't think we will really know for certain why, but without doubt a composer's mood (and their environment) does seem to have an impact on the music they are writing.

When a young student of mine is learning a piano piece for the first time, I often ask them how they feel about the music, what mood or character they think the composer is conveying and how the key may reflect that. For very young students, I ask them simply if the piece sounds 'happy', 'sad' or 'scary', before going on to explain the rather less-interesting musical descriptions of 'major' and 'minor'. Some years ago, much to my great surprise, I was asked by a parent not to give her son any pieces in a minor key. When I told her that that automatically dispensed with nearly 50 per cent of the piano repertoire, she just huffed and said that 'minor' pieces upset her son and were not to his liking. Perhaps some composers feel the same way.

A great deal of fascinating statistical analysis has been done on the usage of musical keys (though very little has been done on composers' least-used keys for some reason), and a number of histograms (a graphical representation of the distribution of numerical data) have been made shedding light on the most popular keys used by classical composers. Mozart, for instance, wrote a large number of works in the key of C and D major, seemingly his most popular keys, while some of Beethoven's best-known works (the Fifth Symphony, the Third Piano Concerto) were written in C minor. Bach wrote many works in D minor (the *Chaconne* from the solo violin sonata BWV 1004, the *Art of Fugue*), while Rachmaninov and Brahms seemed to have no real preference at all. And while Haydn seemed to have a liking for C, D and G, he didn't seem to like (along with Mozart and Beethoven) the keys of C sharp major and A flat minor.

Clearly, aesthetics plays a considerable role. Much research has been done on the effects of music on the brain, measuring the links between music, colour and emotion. And, whether consciously or not, synaesthesia (or chromesthesia), a term most often associated with the likes of Alexander Scriabin, the great Russian composer, seems to play its part too. In dictionary terms, synaesthesia is an involuntary response that causes people to see colours when they hear a musical sound. Perhaps this explains why many composers have fixated on particular keys, and the reasons we, as listeners, respond to them in a certain way: Mozart liked C minor (the glorious

CLASSICAL COMPOSERS AND THEIR FAVOURITE KEYS

Bach

Written for solo violin, the Chaconne in D minor (one of Bach's favourite keys), is one of the longest and most challenging pieces in the repertoire. Brahms, who transcribed it for piano, wrote: 'It is for me one of the most wonderful, incomprehensible pieces of music. On a single staff, for a small instrument, the man writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and the most powerful feelings. If I were to imagine how I might have made, conceived the piece, I know for certain that the overwhelming excitement and awe would have driven me mad.'

Beethoven

Pianist and scholar Charles Rosen writes of Beethoven and his fondness for C minor: 'Beethoven in C minor has come to symbolise his artistic character. In every case, it reveals Beethoven as a Hero. C minor does not show Beethoven at his most subtle, but it does give him to us in his most extrovert form, where he seems to be most impatient of any compromise'. C minor was often associated with the so-called *Sturm und Drang* movement of the Classical period, with a feeling of great drama and heroic struggle, but often popular with Romantic composers too. Examples: Symphony No 5, 'Pathétique' Sonata No 8 op 13, Piano Sonata No 32 op 111.

Chopin

The key of A flat was supposed to have been one of Chopin's favourite keys, and Mendelssohn wrote of Chopin's Prélude in A flat op 28 no 17: 'I love it! I cannot tell you how much or why; except perhaps that it is something which I could never at all have written.' There were other keys Chopin liked as well. He seemed to have a fondness for A minor, as in the charming little Waltz in A minor op 34 no 2. When his contemporary, the composer Stephen Heller, remarked that it was his favourite, Chopin told him that it was his favourite too. The great pianist and teacher Alfred Cortot wrote of Chopin's Prélude in F sharp minor op 28 no 8, in a challenging key and considered to be one of the most difficult of all the Préludes, 'The snow falls, the wind screams, and the storm rages; yet in my sad heart, the tempest is the worst to behold.'

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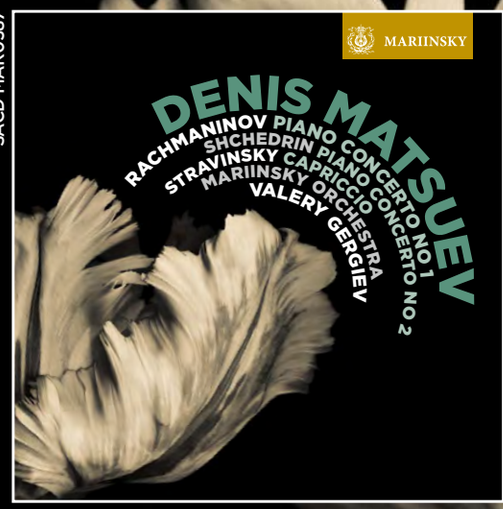

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C minor Mass and the Piano Concerto No 24 are perfect examples); Schubert seemed happy writing in B flat (the sublime last piano sonata) and Chopin, being first and foremost a pianist, seemed to have an affinity for the key of A flat – perhaps because it sat comfortably under the hand.

In Tom Douglas Jones' book, *The Art of Light and Colour*, there is a reference to Schubert describing E minor as 'a maiden robed in white with a rose-red bow on her breast'. In another example, two famous Russian composers, Scriabin and Rimsky-Korsakov, were listening to a piece in D major that they both likened to the colour yellow. Yet while both composers held a deep fascination with sound and colour, they could never quite agree all the time. C major was 'white' for Scriabin, but it was 'red' for Rimsky-Korsakov; and where F sharp for Scriabin was 'violet', to his compatriot it was 'green'. But they did seem to agree on E flat, which for both of them was either 'bluish-grey' or 'steely'. Scriabin, however, even went a step further, and invented a 'clavier à lumières' (literally, 'keyboard with lights') or 'tastiera per luce' as it appears in the score of his *Prometheus: Poem of Fire*, a symphony of sound and light, which projects various colours throughout the concert hall in accordance with melodic movement and instrumental tone. While almost impossible to perform accurately as the composer first intended, there is nevertheless a truly remarkable performance on YouTube for anyone interested, a unique collaboration between a Yale music graduate (a Russian scholar), the Yale Symphony Orchestra's conductor, Toshiyuki Shimada, and Justin Townsend, an award-winning lighting designer.

It's not unheard of either for a professional musician to describe the music they are performing in terms of colour, and in masterclass situations in particular, they are often heard trying to convey a point of interpretative interest by making such 'colourful' associations. The great Catalonian cellist Pablo Casals, for example, whose name is indelibly linked to Bach and his cello suites in particular, even went as far as ascribing, not a colour, but a particular emotion to each suite: No 1 was 'optimistic', No 2 was 'tragic', No 4 was 'grandiose' and so on. Baroque composers were certainly known for giving their pieces rather elaborate emotional titles – Rameau's harpsichord pieces such as *Les tourbillons* (Whirlwinds) and *La joyeuse* (The Merry One). Numerous 18th-century treatises gave certain affectations or emotional characteristics to different keys, despite the authors often contradicting each other as to what these characteristics actually were.

> *'C minor: A declaration of love and at the same time the lament of unhappy love. All languishing, longing, sighing of the love-sick soul lies in this key'*
>
> **CFD Schubart, 1806**

Most interesting is Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's *Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (written in 1806), in which he outlines the history of key characteristics in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Here's Schubart on C minor: 'A declaration of love and at the same time the lament of unhappy love. All languishing, longing, sighing of the love-sick soul lies in this key.' While D sharp minor seems to conjure up 'feelings of the anxiety of the soul's deepest distress, of brooding despair, of blackest depression, of the most gloomy condition of the soul. Every fear, every hesitation of the shuddering heart, breathes out of horrible D sharp minor.' As a German poet, organist, composer and journalist, Schubart's writings certainly make amusing reading, but it would appear that his talents were undervalued by the locals and, as a consequence of his rather wild life (at least according to contemporary accounts) he was imprisoned for ten years and later expelled from the country.

Timbre and instruments

Over the years, instrumental tuning (compare Baroque tuning with tuning of the present day; see footnote below) has changed a good deal over the years, and what may have sounded strange to an 18th-century composer and audience certainly doesn't sound the same today. Imagine how the dramatic, dissonant, octave leap of Beethoven's last piano sonata (op 111 in C minor) must have first sounded on a 19th-century Broadwood piano when compared to, say, a 9ft Steinway, or those triumphant B flat major chords of the 'Hammerklavier' Sonata that set the tone of the barnstorming first movement.

Undoubtedly, aesthetics have their influence, the so-called timbre of a particular instrument and the range of notes it can play, and it may even explain why some of those well-known violin concertos (Beethoven, Brahms and Tchaikovsky, for instance) were written in the key of D – presumably because it also allows for a greater use of sympathetic vibration between the strings, the use of 'open' strings (a string played without any finger stopping it), giving the music a much 'brighter' sound. Practicalities of certain keys, owing largely to the ease in which they can be played, is another major consideration for any composer. Flat keys are annoying for guitarists (just ask the guitarist) and sharp keys are tricky for reeds and brass. And what musician really likes to play a score littered with thousands of accidentals! If Rachmaninov, who had notoriously large hands, had a hard time of it playing his own Third Piano Concerto, pity those dedicatees who had been waiting years for a famous composer to write something for them, only to find the resulting piece impossible to play because of the limitations of an instrument – or their own abilities.

So the next time you are sitting in a concert hall listening to your favourite piece of music, don't just listen to the performance. Spare a thought for the key as well, and I guarantee it will make the listening experience an even more rewarding one. ■

A SMALL NOTE ON TUNING: For classical music and Western music in general, the most common tuning system for the past few hundred years has been and remains 12-tone equal temperament, which divides the octave into 12 equally spaced semitones. In Baroque music, musicians tune their A to 415 Herz, which refers to the number of cycles per second. On a modern piano, this pitch would sound like A flat, or a half-step lower than usual.

FURTHER READING

The Art of Light and Colour
Tom Douglas Jones (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1972)

How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (and Why You Should Care)
Ross W Duffin (Norton & Co, 2008)

Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst
CFD Schubart (Nabu Press, 2011)

'On the Usage of Musical Keys: A Descriptive Statistical Perspective' Ethan Paik Marzban and Caren Marzban, *The Journal of Experimental Secondary Science*

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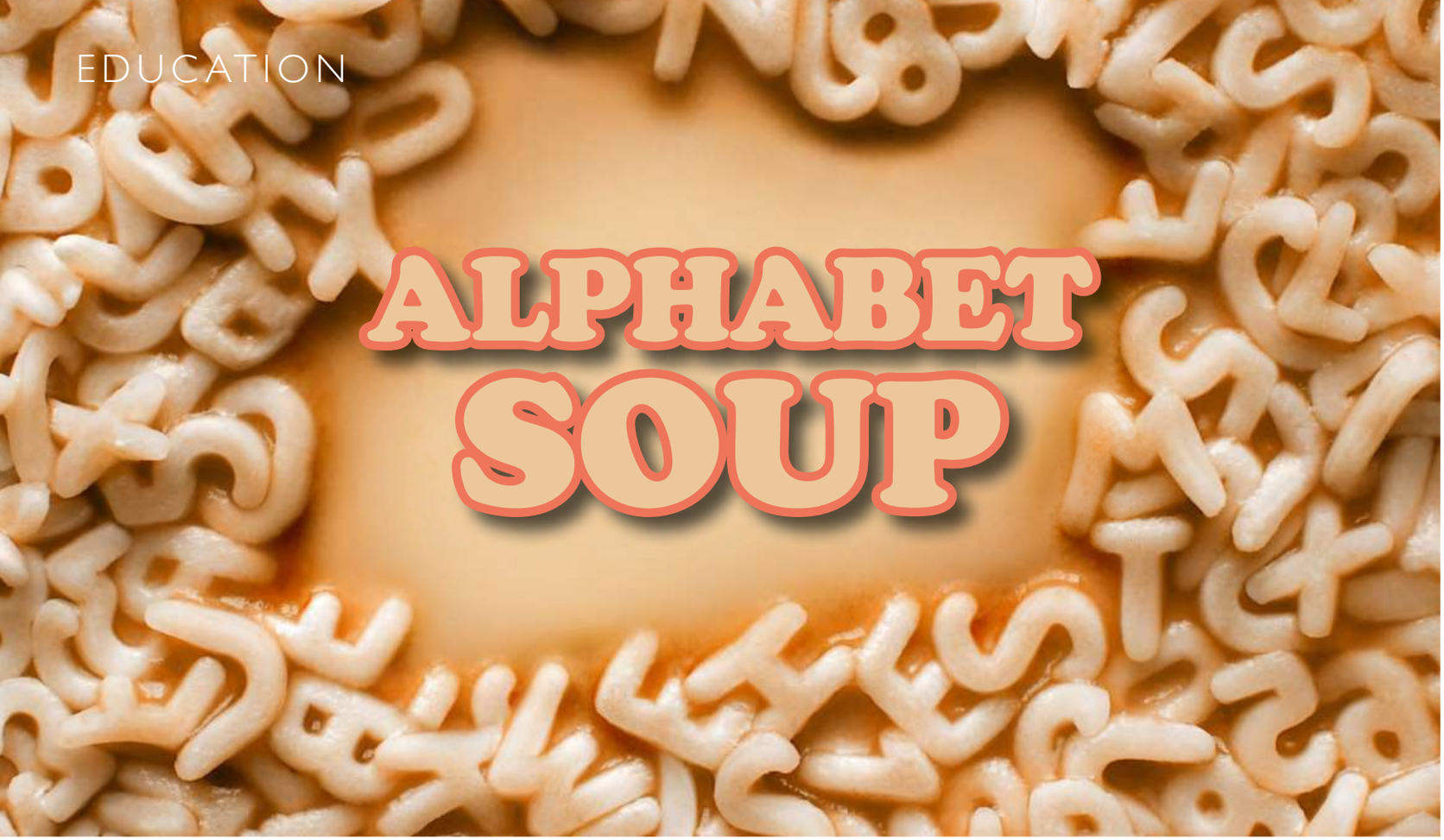


ALPHABET SOUP

Decoding the letters after a teacher's name can be trickier than cracking the Da Vinci Code. So what do all those letters mean and does it matter? **Inge Kjemtrup** asks around

Having the right set of qualifications is fundamental to practising many professions – and a good thing that is, too. You definitely want the surgeon about to operate on you or the attorney about to argue your case in court to have spent some years getting qualified and even more years perfecting their skills under the watchful eye of a master. Furthermore, as your surgeon puts on his mask or your attorney opens her briefing book, you will be hoping that the professional regulatory bodies have done their job and your surgeon's qualifications will be more than watching do-it-yourself heart surgery videos on YouTube or your barrister more than having an expertise in *Rumpole of the Bailey* trivia.

Unlike doctors, lawyers and dentists, private piano teachers are not required to have particular qualifications nor are they closely regulated. On the other hand, piano teachers are not typically involved in saving the life or livelihood of their clients. Yet a bad teacher can have lasting effects on one's musical soul – finding the right teacher *is* important.

So faced with a list of prospective teachers, how do you decide which one to contact? What do all those letters mean after a teacher's name, and do they actually tell you anything about how good that teacher might be? What if a potential teacher doesn't have a thicket of initials after their name?

For some initial guidance on academic acronyms, I spoke with long-time *Pianist* contributor and teacher Tim Stein, who boasts the following letters after his name: ABSM, GBSM, DipMus. I ask him to clarify what they mean: 'The Graduate and Associate of the British School of Motoring,' he explains, which sets me to stupidly scratching my head until I realise he's joking.

In fact, the ABSM means that Stein is an Associate of the Birmingham School of Music (teaching) and the GBSM that he's a graduate of the Birmingham School of Music (graduate in teaching, with distinction for thesis). The former is a specific teaching qualification, while the latter reveals that Stein has gone through the three years of practical and academic study at one of the UK's leading conservatories. Tim happens to be a well-regarded teacher, but would he have done as well in his chosen profession without these qualifications?

'If nothing else, qualifications demonstrate that a teacher was prepared to invest the time, effort and money in developing their teaching – in addition to opening up their teaching to be assessed and critiqued'

That's impossible to know, but, again, there is no official qualification required, in the UK or in the US, to teach a musical instrument 'privately' – that is, one on one. There are plenty of fine musicians who study at a conservatoire or university, acquire an undergraduate or graduate performing degree, and then set out their shingle as a teacher. In fact, many teachers are encouraged into the profession by their own teachers. There

is a long and noble tradition of teaching lineages: for example, Beethoven taught Carl Czerny (who began teaching age 15), who taught Liszt, who taught Moritz Rosenthal, who taught Charles Rosen, and ever onwards.

Voice of the teacher

But some teachers are keen to acquire formal qualifications and it's often internal motivation that causes them to do so. 'Like many teachers, I "fell in" to teaching rather than setting out to do it as a career,' explains Lichfield-based piano teacher and mentor to teachers David Barton. His motivation for gaining a pedagogical degree was distinctly personal: 'The more I taught, the more I felt I wanted to develop my teaching and playing skills further and to have them externally verified. I also valued the encouragement and support of my own teachers in doing this.'

Teaching qualifications come in varying levels, from short courses/certificate programmes requiring a year or less of study to diplomas and advanced credentials demanding several years of study. Most intriguing to me was that most teaching diplomas require a 'viva voce' (literally 'live voice'), an oral exam in which a candidate will demonstrate teaching skills to an adjudicator or panel of adjudicators.

Siobhán Reidy of the ABRSM tells me about their three-part exam for candidates for their qualifications (DipABRSM, LRSM, FRSM; see boxout right). The exam features a 'Teaching Skills Viva Voce' that entails 'a discussion with the examiners and including demonstrations of teaching approaches and performing ability,' Reidy explains. Then there's a 'Written Submission', which is submitted in advance of the exam and which a candidate must be prepared to discuss as part of their viva voce. At Dip and LRSM levels the submission is on a prescribed topic; at FRSM it is on a topic of the candidate's choice, 'which must be approved in advance by ABRSM'. If that isn't enough, there's Quick Study, 'a performance of a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music'. Candidates must pass all three areas to be awarded a diploma by the ABRSM.

Stein recalls feeling nervous about his own viva voce, but he did this before he had any real teaching under his belt. He recalls '45 minutes of grilling on all aspects of piano teaching, such as how to teach a five-year-old how to play legato; how to teach good posture; how to teach scale playing; how to teach pedalling etc, etc – and you have to be able to demonstrate!'

Barton, who also mentors to teachers pursuing qualifications, surprises me by saying that the viva voce is not the aspect of the test that causes the most anxiety to exam-takers. It's the written requirements that unnerve them. 'Sometimes this is because teachers don't have recent experience of academic writing, but often it's because the word limits are very tight to cover such a wide topic area,' he says.

Wisely, for those teachers not yet ready for diploma-level study, there are shorter, professional development courses such as the certificate offered by the European Piano Teachers' Association (EPTA), which involves 'three long residential weekends, three further Sundays and independent study spread throughout the year', as the EPTA website notes.

While praising the EPTA course Barton observes that 'one of the problems today is that there are few specialist instrumental teacher training courses available. While teaching diplomas assess a teacher's ability to teach, they don't, in themselves, train them how to teach.'

Similar offerings come from some of the leading London conservatoires, such as Trinity Laban (offering a PG Certificate and a PG Diploma). Others, such as the Royal College of Music (RCM), offer teacher training through separate forums – the Woodhouse Centre for Professional Development in the case of the RCM.

Help and advice

'I'd say the most valuable resource for anyone thinking about teaching, is actually teachers themselves,' Barton suggests. 'I really valued having my own teachers for mentoring and support when I started teaching; they were unstinting in their encouragement and were always ready to help and advise when I needed it. Beyond that, organisations like EPTA and the ISM [Incorporated Society of Musicians] provide a lot of advice and assistance.'

Tim Stein advises would-be teachers 'to get as many necessary and good qualifications as possible, and from the best establishments possible. And to get as much practical experience as possible.'

It's worth remember that there are, and always will be, many excellent teachers who have no formal teaching qualifications. Being a good musician does not necessarily make you a good teacher. Good one-on-one skills, an ability to understand and overcome a pupil's difficulties, and the wisdom to know how to guide a pupil are not automatically conferred with a diploma. Indeed, in the US, where graded exams of any kind aren't as universal in music education as in the UK, teaching qualifications are less usual in private teaching (though many qualified elementary and secondary classroom music teachers also teach privately).

So what should you ask a potential teacher about qualifications? Barton advises this: 'I would say that qualifications should be considered as part of a wider "package" of considerations. If nothing else, qualifications demonstrate that a teacher was prepared to invest the time, effort and money in developing their teaching, in addition to opening up their teaching to be assessed and critiqued. If they have letters after their names, ask them what they mean and what they did to get them. That said, I don't think any piece of paper is a substitute for actually going to meet with a teacher and seeing firstly whether they provide the sort of tuition you're after, and secondly, whether they're the sort of person you'll be able to work with.

As Barton notes, 'In 14 years of teaching, I have never been asked about my qualifications.' Stein agrees: 'Very few ask, and even those who do, do not know what they are. It is essential to have them as an indication of professional standing an achievement, but not a guarantee you can teach. Expertise comes from doing it, not from having 20 letters after your name!' ■

Qualify street

Sample teaching acronyms decoded

DipABRSM, LRSM, FRSM: Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), Licentiate of the ABRSM, Fellow of the ABRSM

DipLCM, ALCM, LLCM, FLCM: Diploma of the London College of Music (LCM), Associate of the LCM, Licentiate of the LCM, Fellow of the LCM

LRCM: Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music

Cert PTC: Certification of the Piano Teachers' Course, offered by the European Piano Teachers Association (EPTA)

ARCT: Associate of Royal Conservatory of Toronto, the most advanced level of piano certification offered in Canada by the Royal Conservatory of Music

Online resources for finding a teacher

European Piano Teachers' Association
www.epta-uk.org

Incorporated Society of Musicians
www.ism.org

Music Teachers National Association (US)
www.mtna.org

Piano Teachers Federation (North America)
pianoteachersfederation.org

Song of **Roland**

The pioneering Japanese manufacturer has something to sing about – a brand-new range of technologically innovative digital pianos. **Gez Kahan** listens in

Few readers of *Pianist*, I'd hazard, give much thought to the inner workings of the piano industry, any more than I spend my waking hours contemplating the marketing and logistical machinery involved in, say, pharmaceuticals or haute couture. Pianos and paracetamol and fancy frocks just turn up in shops as if by magic, and we buy them.

It can't, of course, be that simple. I'm not sure how the pharmaceutical market works, but I do know that the fashion industry is big on shows where buyers for the main outlets find out what's going to be hot next season, and I assume there must be a whole heap of foot-slogging before that.

That's certainly the way it works in the piano business, though typically with a tad less glitz and glamour. Most of the time it's an endless trudge up and down endless aisles at a trade show if you want to see what's en vogue – but without *Vogue*'s expense account.

From time to time, though, when piano makers feel they have something particularly noteworthy to tell their dealers and the industry press, companies do push the boat out. Which is how this writer found himself cruising down the Seine surrounded by a hundred or so piano retailers on a balmy Monday evening in June.

At this point I suppose I'd better, as is customary, declare a previous interest in – or not so much an interest in, as a past association with – the company concerned. I used to work for Roland, demonstrating what were known then as its 'contemporary keyboards' at trade shows and in shops across the country. By the time I moved on, a whole quarter of a century ago (and what a long time that sounds), they were called digital pianos, and Roland was setting out its stall to become a major player in that market.

Not major enough, though. That's the current thinking in the company, and with good reason. Five Japanese makers account for the vast majority of digital piano sales worldwide, and Roland is one of them. Roland is not the first name on the majority of customers' lips and often not even the second, and that rankles. Roland, you see, has been in the field from the start, but somehow it has never thrust itself into the public's consciousness in the way that one or two others have.

That, the manufacturer has decided, is going to have to change – and that was one of the big themes of the Europe-wide launches Roland held during the summer. Paris, on a lavishly appointed bateau, was where dealers from the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands gathered (with those from other parts of the continent convening in Berlin or Vienna). That alone gives you a sense of the importance Roland attached to its message – and, of course, to its new range of digital pianos.

Before we were allowed to try out the new wares, however, we were invited to take a seat, watch a presentation and be reminded of what people want from a digital piano – tone, touch and dynamic control – and the part Roland has played in developing the technology to give it to them. The world's the first touch-sensitive electronic piano, for instance, was Roland's EP-30, released in 1974 (though the action, by modern standards, left a bit to be desired). And though it's now commonplace, multi-sampling (not only recording a snapshot of each note, but each note played at different volumes) was another first for the company. That technology made its debut in 1986 on the RD-1000 stage piano (Elton John was a prominent advocate) and then in digital pianos for the home market.

In between, Roland – in collaboration with other prominent electronic keyboard manufacturers – had played a leading role in developing a new interface standard to allow digital pianos and synthesizers to 'talk to each other'.

Above: Paris press launch for Roland's new digital range; below: HP-605; opposite: LX-17

Roland incorporates modelling synthesis along with sampling technology in its sound engine, matching the results from standard sampling techniques, allowing unlimited polyphony and greater flexibility in sonic design

The technology, which became MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), was proposed in 1981, refined during the next year, and unveiled in January 1983 by Roland's founder, Ikutaro Kakehashi, along with Dave Smith of the synthesizer company Sequential Circuits. Both men were jointly awarded a Technical Grammy Award for their achievement.

While not immediately enhancing the basic operation of a digital piano, MIDI was vital in furthering the 'digital advantage' as Roland calls it (see also the article in *Pianist* No 84, 'In praise of digitals'). In the early years, price, portability and the headphone socket were the main attractions for purchasers of digital or electronic pianos. MIDI opened a whole range of new options – the addition of sound modules, connection to a computer for multi-track recording, educational software and play-along backing tracks among them – which are not available on a standard 'traditional' instrument. These days, Roland is particularly keen on the potential offered by iPad and Android apps connecting to its new digital pianos via Bluetooth.

Polyphony unlimited

For all that, tone, touch and feel remain the primary considerations for anyone thinking of buying a digital piano, and therefore the primary goal for any manufacturer. Roland adopts a slightly different approach from its main rivals, incorporating modelling synthesis along with sampling technology in its sound engine. 'SuperNatural Modelling', the company contends, not only matches the results from standard sampling techniques but allows unlimited polyphony (yes, you've only got ten fingers, but using the sustain pedal plus harmonic overtones and other incidental sounds such as key and damper noise eat up polyphony at an astonishing rate) and greater flexibility in sonic design. The proof, though, will always be in the playing – and I, for one, was not disappointed.

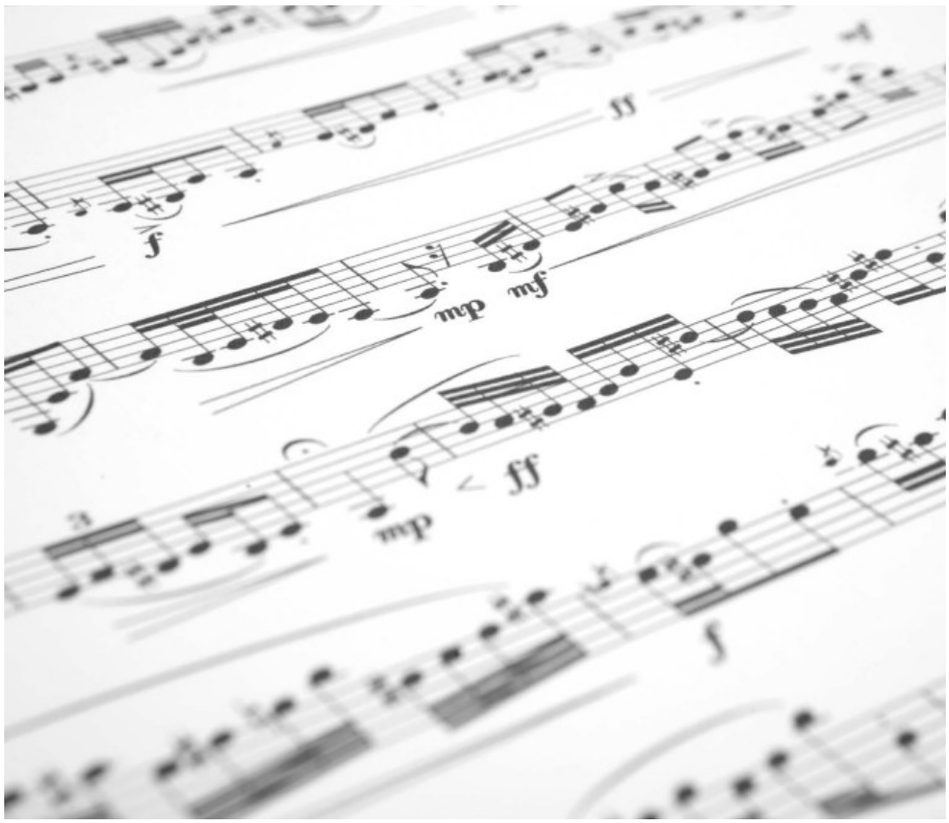
There are four models (with various finish options) in Roland's new range – the HP-605 and HP-603, which come in the traditional Roland digital piano style, and the 'upright-styled' LX-17 and LX-7. I was lucky enough to get some time on the flagship LX-17, which has four sets of speakers, for as immersive a sound as I've ever experienced from a pure digital instrument, an excellent feel to the keys and action, and a very satisfying tone.

This top-of-the-range model may not be especially cheap compared to some other digitals, but that was another of Roland's themes at this launch: that the company is proud of its pioneering history ('We Design The Future' is its fundamental tag line) and has no intention of presenting itself as an also-ran. So while its instruments

will remain competitive, it won't be competing at the bargain-basement end of the market. You'll start seeing its new slogan – 'The Ultimate Digital Piano' – on brochures and in shop displays. The manufacturer is confident that once prospective purchasers get their hands on the new models, they'll recognise that sometimes pushing the boat out is the only way to get what you really want.

And that – pushing the boat out – is exactly what Roland did following the presentation. Chairs were moved, tables were set, wine flowed and so did the Seine. ■

For more information about Roland's new digital piano range, go to www.roland.co.uk and www.rolandus.com.



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Piano round-up

Gez Kahan has all the news from the piano world – a new London showroom for Blüthner, a popular hands-on sales event from Yamaha and a farewell to a top industry figure

Over the years, swanky Berkeley Square has been nice enough (even if nightingales are a rarity there these days) as the location of the **Blüthner** London showroom. These days, the area is really more suited to hedge fund head offices, antiquarian bookshops and posh private members' clubs – *Pianist* readers hunting for an upmarket instrument have found it a little off the beaten track. So it's exciting news that Blüthner has relocated to a new and bigger space, more conveniently located at the junction of Portman Square and Baker Street, not far from bustling Oxford Street and with good transport links.

Blüthner's new location represents a considerable investment by the parent company, necessitating a complete refurbishment of what, according to Peter Corney of Blüthner London, was little more than a shed in the beginning, extending to the creation of an upstairs entrance from the main street. There's a new look, too – instead of the old-world decor of Berkeley Square, Blüthner has gone for a trendier 'warehouse' feel, complete with fully soundproofed ceilings made in its factory and a hard-wearing bamboo floor. The modest yet enticing entrance belies the expansive showroom downstairs, which is stocked with new Blüthner uprights and grands, sister brands Irmler and Haessler, and a selection of Blüthner's digitals. In addition, there are second-hand and reconditioned pianos, which are not confined to house brands – during its sneak preview *Pianist* glimpsed rebuilds including a Steinway and a Bösendorfer. And if your tastes veer to the extreme, there are also custom-shop options. Corney mentions a customer in China who wanted the company's PH grand in mink and another in the UK who wanted it in alligator skin, dyed purple.

Above: the new Blüthner showroom; bottom: Yamaha Piano Selection; Opposite: PianoDisc co-founder Gary Burgett

This is more than simply a shop, though. Instruments are also available to hire, whether for concerts or home use. For those stuck in London with itchy fingers, there are eight air-conditioned studios, with at least one grand in each, and usually a second piano too. These studios are available to rent either for teaching or for practice and Blüthner expects to attract not only members of the general public but big names wanting to prepare for concerts in nearby Wigmore Hall.

Instead of the old-world decor of Berkeley Square, Blüthner has gone for a trendier 'warehouse' feel in its new showroom, complete with fully soundproofed ceilings and a hard-wearing bamboo floor

The new Blüthner Piano Centre is close enough to Jaques Samuel (on the Edgware Road), Steinway Hall (in

Marylebone Lane) and Yamaha London (Wardour Street) for shoppers to plan a walkable tour that takes in half a dozen of the piano world's best-known brands.

At **Yamaha**, meanwhile, to prepare for its annual Piano Selection Sessions, the company is planning to take stock out of its showrooms. Now in its third year, the Yamaha Selection Sessions take place at London's Southbank Centre, and such has been its success that the 2015 version runs for three days, from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 October. This year, several public events have been added, including presentations of Yamaha's new concept TransAcoustic pianos by Bert Smorenburg, Yamaha's international piano demonstrator (see *Pianist* No 79).

The core sessions, however, are 45-minute private appointments where pianists and institutions can audition Yamaha's high-end pianos with a Yamaha concert technician and the company's top piano specialists in attendance (see end of article for further details about booking and times). The models available for audition include comprehensive ranges of CX and CF series handcrafted grands, professional upright pianos, and, for the first time, the complete series of TransAcoustic models. Representing the most extensive range of premium Yamaha pianos in the UK, these Selection Sessions, says Yamaha, provide an opportunity not only to assess the different series of instruments but to try multiple variations of the same models.

Yamaha's digital keyboard division is also taking its wares to the public, setting up CLP Clavinovas for people to try out in nine shopping centres in England and Scotland. The company reports that video clips of shoppers playing started appearing on YouTube within days of the instruments being installed. The models – white and grand-piano shaped – can be found at Brent Cross (north London), the Bullring (Birmingham), Centrale (Croydon), Highcross (Leicester), the Oracle (Reading), Silverburn (Glasgow), Union Square (Aberdeen), the Victoria Quarter (Leeds) and West Quay (Southampton) – and Yamaha plans a week-long promotion (featuring more models and staff to demonstrate and answer questions) at each site during the coming 12 months.

Finally, a farewell to someone who became a major figure in the US piano industry almost by accident. **PianoDisc** co-founder Gary Burgett, who died in May at the age of 65, started out as a pianist and piano teacher before teaming up with his brother Kirk (a piano technician and rebuilder) to start Burgett Pianos. A typical retailer at first, it grew rapidly through diligence and the brothers' marketing

nous – particularly once they found Pianocorder. This was a tape-based player system that would allow any piano to demonstrate itself in malls and department stores to customers who would never have thought to enter a piano shop.

So successful was it that by 1988 Pianocorder accounted for around 40 per cent of the business's turnover – hence the Burgetts' alarm when Yamaha bought the rights to Pianocorder and removed it from sale in preparation for the launch of its own player-piano system.

The Burgett brothers then spent a year developing their own product to replace Pianocorder. Their first PianoDisc model (see *Pianist* No 57) was released in 1989, and sold (and still sells) well. Not only did it rescue Burgett Pianos, but it proved the foundation of an even more successful enterprise, which expanded even further in 1996 with the acquisition of Mason & Hamlin, a highly respected American piano brand that was bankrupt (see *Pianist* No 71). Fortunately, while the cash had gone, the jigs and other design elements had not, and the Burgetts were able to re-create the range (still made in Massachusetts) and return the company to solvency.

The company, while mourning the loss of Gary Burgett, a man universally liked, respected and admired throughout the industry, continues under the direction of his brother Kirk. ■

For more about the new Blüthner London Piano Centre on 6 Baker Street, London, visit www.bluthner.co.uk. To book a private appointment during the Yamaha Piano Selection weekend, email thomas.haydney@music.yamaha.com or call 01908 369224; available times are on Friday 16 October (9am–8pm), Saturday 17 October (9am-7.55pm) and Sunday 18 October (9am-5.25pm). Further Yamaha news, including the Clavinova campaign, can be found at www.uk.yamaha.com. More on PianoDisc at www.pianodisc.com.

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YAMAHA

REVIEW CD

Marius Dawn is bowled over by a live Martha Argerich recording, but Hamelin, Parham and Bognár catch his eye as well in this issue's reviews

Pianist star ratings: ★★★★★ Essential – go get it! ★★★★ Really great ★★★ A fine release ★★ Average ★ Fair

Buy these CDs from the *Pianist* website. Visit http://pianistm.ag/cdreviews

★★★★★

Editor's CHOICE

MARTHA ARGERICH

Carte Blanche Martha Argerich. At Verbier Festival 2007 with guests Yuri Bashmet, Lang Lang, Mischa Maisky, Gabriela Montero, etc
Deutsche Grammophon
479 5096 (2 discs)

The music festival in the Swiss mountain town of Verbier has always attracted the world's leading musicians, and one of the regulars is Martha Argerich. At last year's festival, she played the Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto at the opening concert but otherwise wasn't in evidence, unlike 2007 when she was the centre of attention for a full two-hour evening concert, with repertoire and chamber music colleagues she had chosen. You can enjoy this remarkable concert on these two CDs. Right from the aggressive opening of Beethoven's 'Ghost' Trio op 70 no 1, Argerich is in full control, driving violinist Julian Rachlin and cellist Mischa Maisky into a near frenzy. Luckily their supreme musicianship brings style and elegance to the trio, and the slow movement is intense and moving.

Argerich plays the Schumann *Kinderszenen* on her own and is a duo partner with the string players, but it's the Schubert and Ravel duos with Lang Lang that is most memorable. Judging by the booklet photo Argerich gave Lang Lang the primo part, but her rhythmic intensity in the Ravel is magnificent. Her way with Schubert is always forward-moving, and is most clearly heard in the 'Arpeggione' Sonata where she steals the limelight from violist Yuri Bashmet. The final encore track with Gabriela Montero will make you want to stamp your feet!

ZSOLT BOGNÁR

Plays Franz & Franz. Works by Schubert, Schubert arr. Liszt, & Liszt
Con Brio Recordings
CBR21346

★★★★★

Don't let this disc's slightly naff title deter you from discovering a fine, sensitive musician who plays what is written in the score without the idiosyncrasies that often make their way into modern performances of the Schubert impromptus. I like the album concept, where original Schubert is followed by Liszt's transcriptions of Schubert and then an original Liszt work. Bognár's beautiful singing tone is at is best in the Schubert/Liszt transcriptions. The thunder, fear and despair of his 'Dante' Sonata harks back to the Golden Age. This is a beautiful, highly detailed production where even the coffee machine brand gets a credit (it's a Krups).

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

Leo Ornstein: Piano Quintet op 92; String Quintet No 2 op 99
With the Pacifica Quartet
Hyperion
CDA68084

★★★★★

It is rare to find a composer so totally unknown that even specialists have to google his name. The piano quintet on this disc by Russian-born Leo Ornstein (1893-2002 – yes, the years are correct!) is an indisputable masterpiece. The 40-minute three-movement work sounds like Franck gone mad or Debussy on speed. The harmonic language is close to Scriabin, but still accessible. The piano part is excruciatingly difficult, yet Hamelin sails through it with aplomb. The Pacifica Quartet are worthy partners and the entire CD is such an overwhelming experience that I urge you to get it so you can brave your way into the originality of this composer's mind.

ELISABETH NIELSEN

Bach: English Suite No 2; Schumann: *Carnival of Vienna*; Prokofiev: Sonata No 6
Danacord
DACOCD 761

★★★★

Talented youngsters keep popping up like flowers in the spring. This Danish pianist, not yet out of the Royal Danish Academy of Music, first trained as a ballet dancer. Her lively booklet notes and original drawings show an artist with wide interests– and she also plays the piano well! The dancing rhythms of Bach's Second English Suite are spot on, and her Prokofiev Sixth Sonata can be ranked among the most persuasive. Her precise attack and crystalline clarity, even in the final movement, is utterly convincing. The recorded sound is well balanced. Let's hope that more Russian repertoire – so close to her heart, as she says in her notes – is on its way.

LUCY PARHAM

Odyssey of Love – Liszt and his Women
With Juliet Stevenson & Henry Goodman
Deux-Elles
DLX 1156

★★★★★

Liszt's intimate letters and diaries come to life on this CD with pianist Lucy Parham and two formidable actors, Juliet Stevenson and Henry Goodman. To hear the actors narrate Liszt's life, love and languor is a rare pleasure, as rare as finding a programme where words, music and poetry are tightly connected. In a carefully thought-out selection of pieces, particularly magical are the yearning *Un sospiro* and thrilling *Chasse-Neige*, and Parham has total control of even the most difficult passages. With music ranging from hushed inwardness to stormy flashiness, Liszt led a life paralleling his music – and here it is, all bound together in living music history.

FRANCESCO PIEMONTESI

Mozart: Fantasy in D min K397; Sonatas K284, K533, Rondo in D K485, Rondo in A min K511
Naïve Records
V 5367

★★★

Programming a CD with a collection of Mozart piano works is not easy: it's usually sonatas on their own or a cornucopia of shorter works. Few understand how to blend these. On his new disc Piemontesi cleverly adds a couple of rondos after a fine performance of the less-popular D major Sonata. His opening D minor Fantasy borders on the slow side with elaborate figurations and runs, however it has never been one of the easiest Mozart works to interpret. The highlight is the F major Sonata where the opening Allegro has a momentum lacking in the previous works. I'm not entirely persuaded that Mozart and Piemontesi are a perfect match.

DARIA VAN DEN BERCKEN

Keys to Mozart. Sonatas K332, K282, K331; Fantasie in C min K396, etc
Sony Classical
88875060112

★★★

I have often quoted the famous line that Mozart is too easy for amateurs and too hard for professionals. In Mozart, everything is transparent and there are no big chord progressions to hide imperfections. One needs even fingers with fleet runs and scales – and that is a great positive in Daria van den Bercken's playing. She fares well in the stormy Sonata 'Alla Turca' where her flawless technique dazzles, but in the Adagio opening of the E flat major Sonata, the musical direction is unclear. Technically, this disc is kept in a tight grip, but musically there are limitations. The stand-out is the C minor Fantasie, which has a restlessness that suits her musical personality.

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REVIEW SHEET MUSIC

Michael McMillan looks at Henle's new single edition Brahms and Rachmaninov, Melanie Spanswick's *Digressions*, duet treats and more in this issue's round-up

GRADE BY GRADE PIANO: GRADES 1-5

Boosey & Hawkes
ISMN: 979-0-060-12675-8 (Grade 1); -12676-5 (2); -12767-0 (3); -12768-7 (4); -12769-4 (5)

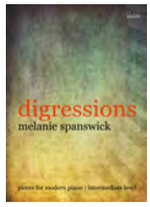
This series of graded books was compiled and edited by Iain Farrington, a British pianist/composer/arranger. They are presented as being 'the complete resource' for students at Grades 1-5 because each book contains not just repertoire (about 15 pieces each, including originals by Farrington and his excellent arrangements of well-known music), but also small sections on scales, aural awareness, duets, sight-reading, theory and improvisation. These additional sections are so short, however, that I wonder if they have any practical benefit for students, whose teachers will surely have those areas covered by other means. Look to these books for the music instead – they don't have the breadth of styles found in other graded books, but the more modern choices here will appeal to plenty of students.

THE JOY OF.... LISZT, RAVEL, ELGAR, HOLST

Wise Publications
ISBN: 978-1-78305-718-4 (Liszt); -866-2 (Ravel); -538-8 (Elgar); -539-5 (Holst)

Denes Agay, the late Hungarian-born American composer and educationalist, was the author of 96 books, including the popular *Classics to Moderns* series, and *The Joy of…* series, now running at around 50 titles. Agay's work has been carried on by others such as Stephen Duro, and, in the case of these four books, Sam Lung. The 14 pieces in the Liszt volume all appear in their original form – this is not simplified Liszt, and the pieces are by no means his easiest. Ravel's volume contains a mixture of original piano solos (such as *Jeux d'eau* and *Oiseaux tristes*) and advanced arrangements (such as *Boléro*). The Elgar and Holst volumes include arrangements, for the most part, of these composers' best-known pieces such as the 'Enigma' Variations and *Planets Suite*, which are generally around Grade 8 in difficulty.

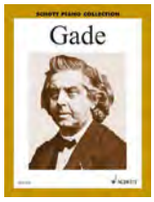
DIGRESSIONS



Melanie Spanswick
EVC Music Publications
ISBN: 978-0-9931316-3-9

Digressions is a collection of five short pieces around Grades 4-6 by Melanie Spanswick, a British pianist/author/educator whose how-to-play articles appear in this magazine. The style is inspired by Minimalism and cinematic music. Spanswick's goal is to provide music that is 'short, attractive, and easy to digest, for teenagers and adults who want an alterative to the jazz/ragtime idiom, musical theatre genre or easy listening culture.' In this she has succeeded: the highly patterned music lends itself to rapid assimilation. The lyricism of *Karma* and dramatic nature of *Digression*, in particular, should appeal to its target consumers; the pianistic writing also promotes technical development. You can sample the music at www.elenacobb.com, or watch the composer herself performing them on YouTube.

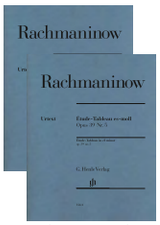
NIELS WILHELM GADE



Selected Piano Works
Schott
ED 21719 (ISMN: 979-0-001-19787-8)

Danish composer Niels Gade was alive during much of the 19th century, and his piano music is written in a Romantic vein typical of the earlier part of that century. This volume presents a good cross-section of his work, from the early *Spring Flowers* op 2b (1841) to the *New Aquarelle* op 57 (1881). There are three additional pieces by other composers with references to Gade: a Grieg *Lyric Pieces* (op 57 no 2), entitled *Gade*, and a piece each by Jensen and Schumann that include G-A-D-E motifs. Gade's music in this volume all falls well under the hands, is tuneful and ranges from Grade 5 to Grade 7 in difficulty. Few books by this composer are available, so this is a welcome addition. If you'd like to explore more of his music, I'd recommend the ABRSM's Gade volume, edited by Lionel Slater.

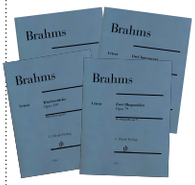
RACHMANINOV



Etude-tableau in E flat minor op 39 no 5; Prelude in G sharp minor op 32 no 12
Henle
HN1264 (ISMN: 979-0-2018-1264-9); HN1213 (-1213-7)

Henle recently published the complete sets of Rachmaninov Preludes (HN1200) and Etude-tableaux (HN1202), both 'Best Buy' choices in their respective repertoire. Henle has now released four single editions from those sets, including three famous preludes (C sharp minor op 3 no 2, G minor op 23 no 5 and G sharp minor op 32 no 12) and the Etude-tableau in E flat minor op 39 no 5. Rachmaninov's own fingerings are in italics and are supplemented by fingerings from Marc-André Hamelin, who says he 'generally tried to stick to fingerings which would benefit a large hand, even though there are many pianists with very small hands who happily tackle these pieces.' There's also a preface and critical commentary. If you're after any of these pieces, look no further.

BRAHMS



2 Rhapsodies op 79 (HN1251); Fantasies op 116 (HN1216); 3 Intermezzi op 117 (HN 1042); Piano Pieces op 119 (HN1250)
Henle

Henle's previous edition of these shorter piano solo works was created in the 1970s by Monica Steegman (editor) and Walter Georgii (fingering). These new editions were extracted from one of three volumes (HN6014) of piano solo output in Henle's new edition of Brahms's complete works, and completed by Katrin Eich (editor) and Andreas Boyde (fingering). The musical engraving and fonts have had a subtle facelift, giving the print a sharper and more attractive look. The presentation is more condensed than Bärenreiter's similarly priced recent editions of opp 116-9, but the text is easy to read, and Henle's page turns are equally convenient. A short preface and commentary is in each volume, completing impressive and desirable editions of these masterpieces.

MASTERWORK CLASSICS DUETS LEVELS 7 & 8

Kowalchyk, Lancaster & Magrath (editors)
Alfred Music
ISBN: 978-07390-9718-2 (Level 7); 978-07390-9719-9 (Level 8)

The ten books of the *Masterwork Classics Duets* series cover a wide spectrum of difficulty – from teacher-student duets at Level 1 to Grade 8 by Level 10. Levels 7 and 8 each contain roughly 80 pages of varying difficulty, about Grades 4-7. Favourites such as Moszkowski's *Spanish Dance* No 1, a selection of Brahms' waltzes, Debussy's *En bateau* and the Berceuse from Fauré's *Dolly Suite* feature alongside lesser-known, but charming, works by composers such as Schytte, Cui and Poldini. The parts are presented on facing pages, rather than above each other, editorial fingering (but not pedalling) is included, and brief biographical notes are printed at the back. In sum, these are easy to recommend for their good choice of repertoire, and clear presentation.

MOZART*

Works for Piano Duet
Bärenreiter
ISMN: 979-0-006-52942-1

This is a newly engraved and revised Urtext edition of Mozart's music for piano duet, based on the musical text of the relevant volume from the New Mozart Edition, which appeared in the 1950s, and the performance editions that emerged from it subsequently. It is a large (200+ pages) book with minor works not included in similar collections by Henle, Peters and Wiener Urtext. Bärenreiter's is the only edition without any fingering, while Wiener Urtext's volume is the only one to present the primo and secondo parts above one another (i.e. on the same page) instead of on facing pages. Unfinished works are printed both in the manner that Mozart left them, and in a completed version by Michael Töpel. An authoritative, reassuringly expensive edition.

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